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ABSTRACT

This report presents a very detailed look at the elementary school principal's day-to-day activities. The executive summary highlights the study's chief findings and suggests where major problems exist. Although concerns have been raised about student behavior and discipline, results indicate that most elementary principals at the Montgomery County (Maryland) Public Schools (MCPS) can effectively carry out their roles as disciplinarians and a orchestrators of school climate. They are also doing good liaison work with parents and the community. The study did identify some pressing problems related to instructional leadership (curriculum implementation, testing, and training for new principals); staffing (allocation, selection, and evaluation); and communication among schools and central offices. Recommendations for solving these problems are contained in the summary. The report then presents a typical day in the life of an elementary school principal. The remainder of the report describes the various activities and interactions encountered by MCPS principals as they fulfill their job responsibilities. Principals are seen as instructional leaders, staff leaders, creators of school climate, disciplinarians, and community relations and special program managers. Job satisfaction levels are also mentioned briefly. Two appendices are attached. Appendix A contains graphic information concerning principals' time apportionments. Appendix B contains tables presenting detailed findings for each study issue. (MLH)

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MONTGOMERY COUNTY
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ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

Study of the Changing Role of the Elementary Principal

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EA020 361

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Carver Educational Services Center
Rockville, Maryland

STUDY OF THE CHANGING ROLE OF THE ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL

By

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THE STUDY OF THE CHANGING ROLE OF THE ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The role of the elementary school principal is complex and multifaceted. In a single day a principal may function as an instructional leader, as a mid-level manager, as a disciplinarian and orchestrator of school climate, as a liason between the school, parents and the community, as the "point man" in various crises, and as a cog in the MCPS bureaucratic wheel.

Our observations show that in each of these roles there are changes which have occurred in the demands made on principals which have altered their role and in some cases made it more difficult. Our observation data also show, however, that not all of the changes which have come about pose equally pressing problems for the elementary school principal; and, despite new demands, principals continue to exercise many functions without major problems. For example, although concerns have been raised about student behavior and discipline, the study indicates that most MCPS elementary schools are well ordered, welcoming places for learning. In spite of situations which may disturb individual schools, we generally found principals able to carry out their roles as disciplinarians and orchestrators of school climate effectively. In addition, we also found that principals are doing a good job as liasons with parents and the community. And, although in many instances the role of the principal may seem suspiciously like that of the the parish priest -- the one turned to to solve any crisis that arises either in or outside of school -- the demands made in this area are generally being handled smoothly.

In a number of other areas, however, significant problems were found. And, it is our feeling that these problems are in need of immediate attention. Specifically, pressing problems were identified in the areas of support for instructional leadership, staffing (allocation, selection and evaluation), and in the relations among schools and the area and central offices.

Problems Related to Instructional Leadership

Instructional leadership can mean many things. It can include assisting and/or training teachers in the delivery of instruction, modeling or developing instruction, selecting materials to be used in instruction, and monitoring the implementation of instruction. The study indicates that over the last decade there have been significant changes in the types of leadership activities that MCPS principals are expected to provide, stemming in large part from the systemwide adoption of instructional priorities and the installation of uniform curricula.

Curriculum Implementation

Today principals are expected to perform much more of a monitoring, management, or staff development function than was true in the past. The image of the principal setting priorities, developing instruction, selecting textbooks and other material supports has faded. Like the director of a play,

the principal is now charged with taking a script written by a talented playwright and making it come to life on his/her own stage. (Also, like a director, principals may or may not be enamored of the script!) Clearly this role is both creative and challenging, but it taps different skills and requires different training and experience than that of a designer and developer of an original program.

While many principals feel that the installation of the new curricula has resulted in many benefits -- clarification of objectives, a conceptually sounder approach to instruction, and strengthened guidelines for monitoring -- most also feel that critical supports for making the new models work have not been provided in sufficient quantity. Needs emerging as salient are increased training of principals in monitoring, training of teachers in program implementation, and increased availability of the books and other materials needed to support the new systems. Principals also feel that the current division of responsibilities, vis a vis local vs. central decision making, has swung too far in delimiting the inputs of principals and teachers in setting instructional priorities.

To address these problems we recommend:

- Increased training should be provided to principals in the monitoring of the implementation of curriculum and in the use and interpretation of test data. In conjunction with this, clarification needs to be given regarding the role of principals in these areas, as compared to those of the area and central offices.

- Added supports are needed for principals in the training of teachers in implementing the new instructional systems. One way of solving this problem would be to add half-time curriculum specialists to those schools currently without a curriculum specialist or assistant principal.

- Principals should be given sufficient supplies and materials to support the instructional systems. In addition, principals should be given more control over their budget in this area.

- Principals and teachers should be more heavily involved in the establishment of instructional priorities.

Testing

A second major area of concern to principals as instructional leaders is that of the use and interpretation of tests. Many principals feel that test scores now play too large a role in defining school success and are too influential in determining the direction that instruction should take. They feel that test results are used in making assessments about schools without taking the particular characteristics or needs of a school into account. Finally, they feel that the proliferation of tests has led to an outpouring of paper and numbers that they are inadequately equipped to understand or use.

In addition to making sure that principals do understand and can use the test data they are provided (as recommended above), it is further recommended that:

- o MCPS should continue its attempt to focus on other measures of student performance than test scores. Test scores should be viewed as just one of the many ways of assessing student outcomes, and should not be weighed as heavily as they are at present in program development or assessing the strengths and weaknesses of individual schools.

Training for New Principals

The study clearly shows that there is no one leadership style that "works best." If anything, our observations show that many different approaches can work depending upon the specific needs of a school, its teachers, and its students. In order to prepare principals for dealing with situations which may vary widely, it is our recommendation that:

- o Training for those wishing to become principals should allow trainees the opportunity to observe principals who may be working in very different environments. In all of the areas, potential principals need the experience of learning from a variety of experts, so that when they are on their own they will have a fuller repertoire of coping strategies on which to draw. It is suggested that during the training year trainees be given the opportunity to visit different schools, perhaps for several days at a time, to get the flavor of other populations and different management styles.

Problems Related to Staffing

Staff leadership includes a variety of tasks. It includes the everyday interactions with staff, insuring that staff fulfill their responsibilities on the job on a daily basis, and selection, evaluation and surplus or retention of staff. Conflicts over allocation of staff, responsibilities for staff selection and assignment, and concerns over the evaluation process are certainly not new to MCPS. The study shows, however, that current complaints stem from some very real problems and that these problems may have important effects on the ability of principals to function as well as they might.

Staff Allocation

One of the issues seen by the principals as being particularly problematic is that of the allocation of staff to elementary schools. Forty percent of the principals would like additional staff to reduce class size. Many other principals feel the need for additional non-classroom professional support and administrative staff. Principals also feel burdened by delays in filling staff positions, especially when positions are frozen or other lapses in coverage occur. Our study suggests that while schools of all sizes are suffering under the present allocation procedures, very small and very large schools face special problems.

The problem of the small school can be called the "Tale of the Lone Principal." In small schools, which only in exceptional cases have support positions such as assistant principals, curriculum specialists, or full time counselors, the principal and the principal's secretary must cope with all the activities -- paperwork, reporting, counseling of students and parents, nose wiping, bandaging, community outreach, etc. -- that are handled by more

staff at other schools. While some of these are tasks dependent in magnitude on student enrollment, others place consistent demands, regardless of the number of children served. In such a situation principals begin to feel tied to their schools, unable to leave or leaving only by reallocating the time of some classroom teacher to activities which must be "covered" during the principal's absence. The result is that principals in small schools have limited opportunities to participate in activities outside their schools such as MCPS staff development workshops; they become isolated from their peers and unable to fully participate in the MCPS system.

The problem of the large school is somewhat different. While more staff are typically available because the current allocation formulae do provide differential staffing in elementary schools based on school size, the total number may still be insufficient in many cases. Based on our observations in both elementary and J/I/M schools we feel that the formulae for staff allocation continue to make what we feel are false distinctions between the staffing needs of an elementary and J/I/M school with equal sized enrollments.

All schools, however, are impacted by lapses or delays in filling staff vacancies.

Based on these findings we offer the following recommendations concerning the allocation of professional staff:

- Consider creating a 10 month non-categorical professional position for elementary schools without assistant principals or curriculum specialists that could be used to assist the principal in administrative duties.

- Reexamine the current guidelines for assigning staff to large elementary schools. Reexamine the rationale for making distinctions between the needs of large elementary and small J/I/M schools.

- Reconsider the practice of delaying the filling of staff vacancies to divert lapse monies to other needs.

Supporting Services Staff Selection

While principals would like more flexibility in selecting and assigning professional staff, the management of professional staff does not appear to be as major a problem as that of supporting services staff. Issues centering on supporting services staff repeatedly and consistently emerge as problems. First, principals and central and area office staff are all vocal in stating that the new MCCSSE Senior Most Qualified (SQ) regulation has adversely impacted selection and management of supporting services staff and the smooth and effective functioning of the schools. Principals are unanimous in the desire to see that procedure eliminated.

Second, principals cited many instances of the lack of sufficient clerical personnel. Serious problems arise when substitutes cannot be found for absentees, or vacancies are not filled in a timely fashion. Several principals reported lapses in secretarial coverage of weeks or months due to illness, transfer, or promotion of a secretary. Others reported that so many duties and responsibilities have been assigned to their secretaries

that they effectively no longer have a "principal's secretary" at their disposal. They report that there are many times that they, themselves, must perform clerical tasks that in the past would have been completed by their secretaries. The sight of a principal tied up answering routine phone calls and handling other clerical tasks occurred far too frequently during our observations to be dismissed. This problem is especially pressing in small schools where all administrative work falls to the secretary and the principal. However, it is a problem in schools of all sizes, and MCPS needs to decide whether performing clerical tasks is an effective use of principals' time.

To address these concerns, the following recommendations are offered:

- Aggressive renegotiation with MCCSSE should be undertaken to eliminate the SQ agreement.

- MCPS should attempt to fill supporting services vacancies as soon as they become vacant. Additionally, consideration should be given to forming a clerical substitute pool that can be called upon when clerical staff are ill for a day or more.

- MCPS should reconsider secretarial needs in elementary schools in light of the additional duties that have fallen to these staff in the past decade.

A related issue has to do with health aides. Assignment of a health aide to a school impacts directly on the burden of the elementary school secretary, and thus, the principal. Health aides are used in the schools to deal with sick or hurt children, and to dispense medicine to those children on daily medication. Between the hours of 10:00 A.M. and 2:00 P.M., when some students are typically at recess, there is a steady stream of sick, hurt and crying children to the health room. The need for a secretary or in the secretary's absence, the principal, to deal with these situations has a significant effect on how time can be spent during many critical hours of the elementary school day.

To deal with this problem we recommend that MCPS:

- Provide health aide coverage to all schools for at least the middle four hours of the school day. MCPS should consider negotiating with the Health Department for additional health aide coverage for schools. In the absence of this coverage, MCPS should allocate non-instructional aides to schools without health aides between the hours of 10:00 A.M. and 2:00 P.M. each day.

Evaluation

The current systems for evaluation of both professional and supporting services staff also emerged as significant problems. While on balance it appears that the evaluation system for teachers is working for those performing in the effective range, the system is seen as far less useful for either ineffective teachers or special staff such as curriculum specialists and guidance counselors.

A number of principals feel that the process of evaluating out poor teachers is too tedious and time consuming. They see it as a no-win situation. The current evaluation form for supporting services personnel is viewed even more negatively. Principals feel that the evaluation form needs a general overhaul. They point to the new form for food services personnel as a substantial improvement and feel it should serve as a basis for modifying the general supporting services form.

The following recommendations are offered to deal in the area of staff evaluation. MCPS should:

- o Consider different evaluation systems for tenured, proven teachers and those who have not yet received tenure. One suggestion is a "short form" evaluation for tenured teachers who are working effectively, and a longer, more detailed form for those not yet in the tenure track or those with tenure who have been given a "needs improvement" rating in more than one area.

- o Seek ways of establishing better procedures to assist principals who wish to use the evaluation system to help a teacher improve or to terminate a teacher who is ineffective. These procedures should be developed by, or with input from, principals and teachers who have had recent experience in this process.

- o Revise the current system that is used for supporting services evaluations. The views from principals should be paramount in this process.

Communication Among Schools, Area and Central Offices

A final area of general concern relates to the lines of communication and authority among schools, area and central offices. The vast majority of principals feel that this area has had increasing problems. They cite conflicting directives from the central and area offices, conflicting schedules for reporting information, overlapping meetings, and problems of turf disagreements between central and area offices which place the schools in the middle.

These problems cut across a wide range of areas, including staffing decisions to program implementation, and interpretation of policies and directives. Most principals indicate that they would like to take their orders from the area office and have all central office requests filter through the areas. They would also like the area offices to have greater control over staffing allocations rather than have the degree of central control which currently exists. More clarification is also needed as to the role of the area office supervisor. Are these people supervisors of principals or not?

Another area of contention centers around the supervision of special personnel assigned to the schools. Of special concern are the central office special education and curriculum coordinators who interact with the special teachers in their school. Principals feel that these staff do not understand the needs of the local school and the need for autonomy of the local principal. Again, the line vs. staff issue needs to be clarified.

To address concerns regarding the relationship among the schools, areas and central offices, the following recommendations are offered:

- The roles of the area and central offices should be reexamined to see if they are functioning as intended and if so, whether or not the current division of responsibility is optimal. Consideration should be given to greater decentralization of authority with the area offices assuming some of the functions currently administered centrally. Whether central office personnel should be permitted to supervise and direct school based specialists should be clarified.

- The role of the area office supervisor must also be clarified. Can a person realistically serve as both a line supervisor and a supporter or "buddy?" Which do we want our area supervisors to be? This is an area of confusion which has repeatedly been identified as needing clarification by a number of studies.

Conflicting and overlapping demands between the area and central offices contribute to the paperwork and reporting burden. The same information is requested in different forms or at different times by staff at different levels in the school system. The lack of microcomputer support at the elementary school exacerbates the problem of responding to requests. Many fairly simple calculations or data gathering efforts are made needlessly burdensome by the absence of automated support.

To reduce problems associated with paperwork we recommend:

- MCPS should establish an annual calendar on which all major paper work efforts would be recorded. This calendar would be used to insure that reporting needs that are burdensome could be spread out throughout the year to the extent possible. The calendar should be maintained at the area office and developed after consultation with the various central offices. All non-routine paperwork activities would have to be scheduled by that office.

- All memoranda distributed to a group of principals should be written in the form of the Management Memo. Additionally, when schools are directed to "insert a message about the following in your bulletin for staff or parents" the entire message should be included on the memo so that principals can copy it verbatim in their bulletins.

- Elementary schools should have microcomputers for administrative uses and they should receive the same level of support that secondary schools receive. Enough training should be provided so that the principal and clerical staff can be fully functional in using the computer.

STUDY OF THE CHANGING ROLE OF THE ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL

Who asked for the study: The study was requested by the Elementary Principals' Association (ESAA)

When study was conducted: Design - May 1984 - March 1986
Data Collection - April - August 1986
Analysis and Reporting - July 1986 - Jan. 1987

Authors: Dr. Susan Gross, Dr. Sandra Furey

Advisory Committee: Dr. Gabriel Massaro (Chair 1985-86), Dr. Kathleen Holliday (Chair 1986-87), Joan Israel, Charles Ison, John Lewis, Dorothy Jackson, Diana Phelps, Barbara Contrera, Robert Shekletski

Data Collection Methods and Samples:

Executive Interviews
- 27 Elementary Principals
- 103 Elementary Teachers
- 41 Central Office Staff
- 51 Area Office Staff
- 2 School Board Members

Paper Work Study
- 42 Elementary Principals, 2 per administrative area per week for a seven week time period

Shadowing of Principals
- 18 Elementary Principals, two days apiece
- 7 J/I/M Principals, some for two days, some for one day
- 8 High School Principals, some for two days, some for one day

PREFACE

The attached report presents a very detailed look at the day-to-day activities of the elementary principal. It contains literally hundreds of findings, observations, and anecdotes. We feel that from the study and the many hours spent observing principals we have been able to come up with a pretty clear idea of the present role of the elementary principal and where problems do and do not exist.

The executive summary highlights the major findings of the study and suggests where major problems exist. Recommendations for solving these problems are contained in the summary.

A day in the life of an elementary principal presents a typical day in an elementary school. Contained in this day are examples of how the principal's role has changed over time, and suggestions of which changes have and have not caused major problems.

The remainder of this report is devoted to describing, in considerable detail, the kinds of activities and interactions that principals in MCPS encounter as they fulfill their responsibilities in various aspects of their jobs. While individual principals will recognize statements that were overheard or events that took place in their schools, an attempt has been made to disguise all participants to protect confidentiality. No principal is presented in this report as he/she actually exists, but rather, each principal's actions and beliefs presented herein represents a composite of the actions and beliefs of several principals who were observed.

Finally, two appendices are attached to this report: Appendix A contains graphical presentations of how principals in MCPS spend their time; Appendix B contains tables of detailed findings for each of the study issues.

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PREAMBLE

I had a dream last night. It was morning, and my mother was trying to wake me up. "Get up," she said. "It's time to go to school." "I don't want to go," I said. "I don't have any friends and the teachers don't like me." "You have to get up," my mother responded. "It's your responsibility. You're the principal!"

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF AN ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL

It is 7:00 A.M. and Theresa Tandeano, principal of Willow Springs Elementary School has just arrived at work. Although students will not arrive at school until 8:45, Theresa makes it a practice to be there in the early morning. "It is important for someone to be here to answer the telephone," Theresa says. "Since many of my parents work, it is not always convenient for them to contact me during the day. For many of them the early morning is often the only time they can talk to me uninterrupted.

"Fifteen years ago when I first became principal, the majority of my students walked to school. Their mothers were usually home raising other children, or, if there were no younger children at home, they often volunteered here at school. Today, the students are bussed to school from neighborhoods that are much more spread out, and nearly all of the students' mothers now work. For these reasons, I do not have the same kind of informal contact with the families that I used to have, and I consider this telephone contact time to be essential."

Theresa's principal trainee Alex Horner arrives at school. He has been assigned to Theresa's school for the school year, and Theresa feels fortunate to have him. She states, "Although at the beginning of the year I probably spent a great deal of time with Alex, indoctrinating him to things in the school, the past several months have been wonderful. He has acted in every way like a principal and has lightened the load for me tremendously. By the end of the year he will be managing this school by himself, and I will be involved in a special project that will require me to spend a great deal of time at central office." The telephone rings and Alex answers it. The phone call is from a teacher whose young child is ill, and she will not be able to come to work today. Alex gets busy trying to line up a substitute for the teacher for the day.

Since it is only 7:00 A. M., Theresa is without a secretary for the first half hour of the day. Elementary school secretaries are usually assigned to a school for eight hours a day, but most elementary principals work at least nine hour days. Since Theresa usually is at school from 7:00 A.M. until 5:00 P.M., she is without a secretary for the first half hour and the last hour or more of her work day. She is not complaining, however. "My secretary has been with me at this school for nine years now, and can run this office as well, and maybe better than I can. I have heard horror stories from my colleagues about the lapses they have had in coverage because a secretary has been ill or has left the school, and I just count my blessings.

"In addition to being available to talk to parents in the early mornings, I also use the time to catch up on my endless piles of paper work," Theresa states. "This morning, I hope to be able to work on our school's minigrant proposal for next year." Fortunately for Theresa, this is a relatively quiet morning. She receives only two phone calls from parents that she must deal with herself, and Alex is able to handle the remaining calls that come in. Thus, Theresa is able to spend over half an hour working on the minigrant proposal.

At 8:00 Theresa puts away her paper work. "The time between 8:00 and 8:45 is reserved for my staff," she says. "During the school day teachers are tied up with their students. The early morning and time after school are the only times that teachers can really talk to me for more than a minute or two. Some teachers will seek me out during their lunch breaks, but the contractual agreement stipulates a duty-free lunch for teachers, so I cannot plan on using lunch time to meet with them. I'm going to get a cup of coffee now and drink it while I stand in the outer office greeting teachers." Theresa answers several questions that teachers have and engages in many short conversations while she drinks her coffee. She also spends 15 minutes in her private office with a teacher who had requested an appointment with her to discuss a personal matter.

At 8:40 Theresa leaves the office and walks to the school's main entrance where students have begun to line up to enter the school. She talks to several students, but at all times her eyes are moving back and forth, watching the activity in the bus circle. She shouts at two students that they should not run behind a school bus, then continues her conversation with the students. The interactions between Theresa and the students indicate that she genuinely likes them and cares about their welfare. They appear to be very fond of her as well.

At 8:45 the bell rings and students begin to enter the school. Theresa spends the next 15 minutes in the school's front hall watching students go to class, exchanging casual greetings with staff who are also on their way to class, and talking with parents who have come to school to prepare for the PTA spaghetti dinner that will take place that night. "I'm fortunate that I have such an active PTA," she states. "Even though so many mothers are working these days, I have 15 parents who regularly volunteer in classes and in the office, and the PTA Executive Board is very active in raising funds for the school."

After activity in the hall quiets down, Theresa returns to her office. While she was gone she had three telephone calls, two from parents, and one from her area office. She returns the phone call to the Area Office Supervisor of Special Services, anticipating with trepidation what she thinks she is going to hear. Her fears are justified; the purpose of the phone call is to inform her that the parent who had withdrawn his child from her school and enrolled him in a private school has sued the school system for tuition reimbursement. Theresa must come to a meeting with the MCPS lawyers at the area office the next day.

"Prior to the federal and state handicapped student legislation we had none of this nonsense," she exclaims. "Due process did not exist in the educational vocabulary. I am fully in favor of providing the best and most appropriate education that we can provide to all students, but I wish we did

not have to deal with the lawsuits and all the paper work that we go through in an effort to document that we have done everything to the letter of the law.

"Prior to 1975, other than provide space in my school for a class of students who were learning disabled, I had no involvement with special education students, their parents, or the curriculum. Today, teachers and administrators in the elementary schools are responsible for the entire process, from identifying that the student needs special help to actually providing the help. I've learned a lot over these past 10 or 11 years, and it has been challenging. I think it has also been good for the special students and the 'regular' students to be together. But, it has taken its toll on me."

After Theresa finishes her conversation with the area office supervisor, she returns the phone calls from the two parents. It is now 9:20, and Theresa scurries off to conduct a formal observation of a second-year teacher. She observes the teacher until 10:00, and decides to make her morning rounds of the classrooms and halls on her way back to her office. "I try to make my way around to each classroom daily. Not only do I think that it is good that I am visible to students and teachers alike, but I often see things in my informal visits that I would not have the opportunity to observe in a formal teacher observation."

"I don't have the same involvement in the curriculum today as I did years ago," Theresa states. In the past, I would have had many meetings with teachers, deciding which basal series to buy, which aspects of the curriculum suggested by the basal we should stress, etc. Today, things are quite different. We have countywide curricula in the major subject areas, and it is my job to ensure that my teachers are implementing these curricula correctly. My informal visits provide me with all kinds of information concerning curriculum. I can observe work on the bulletin boards, teachers' plans that are posted in the rooms, and talk to students about what they are doing in class. These activities provide me with enough information to assess which teachers are effectively implementing the curricula and which teachers need assistance from the area office."

Theresa appears to feel more comfortable monitoring the implementation of curriculum in her school than do many of her colleagues. "I have a Masters Degree in Curriculum and Instruction," she states. "It has certainly helped me over the years. Some of my fellow principals are not as well grounded as I am in curriculum supervision. I think the county needs to provide some training to these principals that would help them accomplish these tasks."

Theresa returns to her office at 10:30 and collects her messages that have piled up in her absence. She spends the next 15 minutes answering telephone calls. At 10:45 Theresa and Alex get together for their daily meeting. They plan the remaining of the day's activities, and discuss what is coming up later in the week. They also discuss whether Alex can go to a last minute meeting at central office to learn about the new criterion-referenced tests (CRT's). "It really upsets me when I'm given only one day's notice to attend a central or area office meeting," Theresa states. "Central office staff seem to be so out of touch with the needs of an elementary school," she adds. "I can't just drop everything and run over there. This year, at least I have a trainee. Last year, I would have been scrambling around,

trying to make sure the school was covered while I was out of the building." Theresa and Alex agree that he will go to the meeting and she will stay at school, since she has another teacher observation to do that day as well.

At 11:30 Alex leaves to get some lunch before he makes the trip to central office, and Theresa returns to her paper work. "I really don't know how I have managed all these years without a trainee," she says, "and I don't know what I'll do next year since our enrollment is too low to qualify for an assistant principal. It is high time that the school board and central office administration acknowledge the fact that the elementary principalship is much more complicated and stressful today than it was years ago. I have to be constantly on the run or doing something, just to keep my head above water. Many people seem to feel that, just because the students are little, the problems they bring to school are little as well. But that is just not so. Take today, for instance. I had great plans for my minigrant proposal. But now I am going to have to prepare for meeting with the lawyers tomorrow."

Just as Theresa settles down at her desk, one of the playground aides arrives at her office door with three students in tow. The students, all first graders, had wandered off the playground and were playing in the street while traffic was going by. Theresa talks to the students about where it is safe to play, and the rules for recess. The students promise to stay on the playground during recess time.

Theresa once again settles down at her desk, in the hopes of preparing for the talk with the lawyers. Her secretary comes in with the staff's payroll vouchers, however, and Theresa spends the next 20 minutes signing vouchers, leave forms, and letters the secretary has typed this morning. "I have 53 staff," Theresa says. "Even something as simple as signing the payroll takes time." The time is now 12:15.

Theresa asks her secretary to bring her the confidential folder that contains all the documentation concerning services that the school system has provided to the child who is the subject of the lawsuit. "This child has had his share of problems," Theresa sighs. "He has severe learning problems, and he gets frustrated quite easily. Unfortunately, his parents have not been willing to accept the fact that the child has the degree of problems that we have documented, and are trying to blame the school for not having served him appropriately. The really sad part is that his teacher feels that he was just beginning to make some progress with him in the classroom, and now he is gone." Theresa reads the student's folder, and takes notes on a yellow pad at intervals as she reads.

At 12:35 Alex stops by to tell Theresa he is leaving for the meeting at central office. Just as he is putting on his coat, the playground aide comes into the office with a child who is obviously hurt. The child is crying uncontrolably, and is in a lot of pain. Theresa asks the aide what has happened, and is told that the girl was climbing on playground equipment when she was accidentally pushed by another student. She fell off the playground equipment and has hurt her arm. Theresa's secretary has already looked up the child's emergency telephone numbers and is talking to the mother who is at work. Theresa will accompany the child to the emergency room of the nearest hospital, and the mother will meet them there. However, the mother works in Washington, and it will take her close to an hour to

reach the hospital. The student leaves for the hospital in an ambulance, and Theresa follows in her car. Alex takes off his coat and calls central office to explain why no one from their school will attend the CRT meeting.

Theresa returns to school at 3:00, just as students are leaving for the day. As she comes into the office she says to her secretary, "I think this job is getting the best of me. It's gotten so crazy that the first thing I thought of when I saw that poor child was 'Oh no, I have to fill out an accident report.'" As she takes off her coat she asks her secretary to call on the intercom for the teacher whose observation she missed this afternoon. The teacher comes to the office and they reschedule the observation for the next day. Theresa then settles down at her desk to tackle the increasing pile of work that is there.

By 5:00 Theresa has managed to make a substantial dent in her pile of work. She has completed the accident report and has finished reviewing the file of the special education student. She has done some more work on the minigrant proposal and has discussed her plans with two of her teachers who will probably work on the minigrant project next year if it is funded. She has talked with the school's building services manager to arrange custodial coverage for the spaghetti dinner that evening, and has checked on activities in the multi-purpose room to make sure things were running smoothly in preparation for the dinner.

Theresa and Alex spend the next half hour just relaxing and discussing the events of the day. At 5:30 the telephone rings. It is the mother of the child who broke her arm. She wasn't sure if, in the excitement of the afternoon, she had adequately thanked Theresa for staying with her daughter at the hospital until she arrived. Theresa smiles and assures the mother that she had thanked her earlier. "It's nice to feel appreciated," she says. "Deep down I know that most parents appreciate what we do for their children. However, it's nice to have a reminder every so often." At that moment the PTA president pops her head into Theresa's office, asking her if she is ready for the dinner. "You bet!" she says. "I never did get any lunch!"

Instructional leadership can mean many things. It can include assisting and/or training teachers in delivery of instruction, modeling or developing instruction, selecting materials to be used in instruction, and monitoring the implementation of instruction. When the term instructional leader is used in MCPS it is unclear which of these activities, or how many of them, are envisioned in the mind of the person using the term. The MCPS job description of the Elementary Principal position states that the principal's primary function is instructional leadership. The majority of the principals agree. Almost two-thirds of the principals interviewed stated that instructional leadership is one of their primary responsibilities. Over two-thirds feel they are unable to devote sufficient time to instructional leadership, and would spend more time in this area if time were available.

Data obtained from both interviews and observations of principals show that elementary principals spend an average of 16-17 percent of their time in instructional leadership. They spend, individually, from a low of 5 to a high of 36 percent of their time on instructional leadership. Secondary principals who were observed spent 12 percent of their time in instructional leadership activities. Individual secondary principals spent from 2 to 29 percent of their time in instructional leadership activities.

Styles of Instructional Leadership

"My priority is instruction," principal Marge Goldstein reports. "I spend a great deal of time in the fall working with the teachers. Sometimes the whole staff has to pull together to help a weak teacher. If you came to my school in November,[1] you would see lots of conferences with parents who want their child's teacher changed. I tell them their child will get the same instruction in other teachers' rooms." Marge has a policy in her school that each grade level team must submit instructional plans to her with objectives for the entire marking period. These objectives are sent home to parents with the child's report card. "This way all students in the same grade level receive similar instruction," she states.

"Instructional leadership is a priority for me," responds Leroy Jones, principal of a small elementary school. "However," he states, "instructional leadership is what gets interrupted the most. I would like to spend time with my teachers doing supervisory teacher observations. The only time I can get into their rooms for observations is when they are being evaluated." Principal Luis Garcia agrees with Jones. "I would like more time to observe classes and supervise teachers. These are important aspects of a principal's job." Garcia and Jones express the feelings of 89 percent of the principals who were interviewed. Garcia sums up the situation: "It's not that these things aren't done at all. Rather, they are done in a cursory manner due to time constraints. I don't feel that I am doing as effective job as I know I can."

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1. Observations and interviews of principals were conducted in April and May, and thus may not reflect the totality of principals' activities.

Loretta Wilkins describes her style of instructional leadership differently. "I spend a great deal of time in the classrooms and halls of my school," she says. "I feel that if I'm in each teacher's class daily, by the time the formal observation comes around, there are no surprises for me or the teacher." It is evident that Wilkins practices what she preaches. When Wilkins enters a classroom, the teacher and students do not even look up. They continue with what they are doing, not at all surprised to see her there. Wilkens spends 10 percent of her time cruising the halls and classrooms, practically twice what any of her colleagues spend, and more than 5 times as much time as almost three-fourths of the elementary principals and two-thirds of the secondary principals observed.[2]

Central and area office staff agree that the principal's role in instructional leadership is paramount. "Principals are the educational leaders," says one school board member. "The buck stops with their insuring that teachers carry out their function." However, only one-third of the area and central office staff feel that principals are able to spend a lot of their time on instructional leadership. This comment from a central office staffer summarizes the feeling of many of his colleagues: "They (principals) spend a lot of time on bureacratic stuff, paperwork, reporting. They don't have enough time to be instructional leaders."

Monitoring Implementation of Curricula

While the overwhelming majority of central and area office staff who were interviewed feel that monitoring the implementation of the MCPS Program of Studies is a major instructional priority of principals, over 80 percent feel that curricula are not uniformly implemented in MCPS. The majority feel that this is due to different priorities among principals and/or that principals need training in how to monitor curriculum implementation.

Impact of the Curricula on Principals

Introduction of four major curricula in the elementary schools in the past decade has produced substantial changes in principals' responsibilities. Some principals feel these curricula have made life easier for them, while some feel life has been made more difficult. Jerry Swift, principal of a medium-sized school sums up the opinion of some of his colleagues. "They print the damn thing and throw it at you after a meeting. There was a time when a new curriculum was introduced each year!" Marge Goldstein agrees, "I have four curricula in seven grade levels with 300+ objectives per grade level. In addition there are add-ons such as sex education that I have to worry about."

However, many principals feel that having a uniform curriculum for all

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2. Reports from teachers who were interviewed corroborate these observation findings. Slightly more than one-fifth of the teachers reported that their principals dropped in on their classes daily, and about three-fifths stated that their principals dropped in on their classes a couple of times a week or at least weekly. The remaining one-fifth, however, indicated that their principals only dropped in on their classes monthly or seldom. The average length of each visit, regardless of frequency, was approximately 5 minutes.

elementary schools is necessary, and some feel that having such a curriculum to point to makes it easier for them to deal with parent concerns about their children's instruction. Eighty-five percent of the principals who were interviewed feel that the implementation of new curricula has brought about better defined objectives and strengthened guidelines for monitoring the instructional program.

Training for Principals

The general consensus is that MCPS does not provide sufficient formal training for principals in how to monitor program implementation. What training has been provided typically has been either introduced in Area A&S meetings, or on a one-to-one basis between the principal and the area elementary supervisor. Only three principals reported that they had received any training in this area.

The majority of the principals expressed a need for more formal training sessions on monitoring program implementation. Over one-third of the principals feel central or area office expect them to be doing more than they are currently doing in monitoring curriculum implementation; the majority of the principals feel that central and area office want them to play a major role in monitoring program implementation. However, some feel that the support mechanisms needed to do an effective job in monitoring curricula have not been put in place by the school system.

Training for Teachers

Time Constraints

The vast majority of principals stated that they do not have the time to train their teaching staff in implementing the new curricula that MCPS has developed in the past decade. The observation data corroborate this feeling among principals; virtually no time was spent by elementary principals on teacher training, modeling of instruction, or assisting teachers in program implementation.[3] Secondary principals, however, can spend almost half their instructional leadership time in instructional team meetings with resource teachers and/or other administrators.

Elementary principals report that time when all staff can meet about the instructional program is scarce in their schools. The majority of the principals stated that there is no time during the school day when staff can be brought together for training or planning. Also, they feel that after-school meetings are undesirable because of staff fatigue and the fact that instructional assistants are not present. A few principals have gotten around this obstacle by careful scheduling of art, music, and physical education teachers to free up an entire grade level team.

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3. Almost half of the time elementary principals were observed in instructional leadership activities was spent in teacher observations, and practically all of the remaining time was spent on instructionally-related paper work such as the minority priority reports (ART, MAP, or PRAT), and minigrant proposals.

Staff Constraints

Principals also state that they do not have expert staff available in their schools to train their teaching staff in implementing the new curricula. In this regard, elementary and secondary schools differ. One of the responsibilities of secondary school subject matter resource teachers is to work with staff in program implementation. In elementary schools with a curriculum specialist, however, regular training and inservice activities do take place. In schools without curriculum specialists, training generally consists of central and area office workshops when new programs are implemented, and whatever technical assistance area office teacher specialists can provide.[4] Principals and teachers report that training has been provided to teachers in areas such as HOIS, Gifted and Talented instruction, ISM, LARC, and new programs in science and social studies.

"Training provided to new teachers has been good," says Matt Henry. "However, nothing was provided for old teachers. If I did not have such a good curriculum specialist, they would not have had any training." Anne Powers agrees. "My curriculum specialist is excellent," she says. "Our area teacher specialists have been very good about coming to the school, and the curriculum specialist can provide backup training." Six principals who were interviewed as part of this study have curriculum specialists in their schools. They are unanimous in feeling that the curriculum specialists have made a substantial impact in their schools in how well teachers are able to implement curricula. Over one-fourth of the teachers who participated in this study had curriculum specialists in their schools. They also indicated that the curriculum specialists had been instrumental in providing them with necessary training.

Almost half the principals interviewed feel the support they have received from the area office subject matter teacher specialists has been excellent. One-fourth of the principals, however, feel their teacher specialists have to serve too many schools and cannot devote sufficient time to the training needs of their teachers. Leroy Jones sums up the feeling of many of his colleagues who try to train teachers with limited assistance. "I have a difficult time convincing teachers to teach in different grade levels from year to year," he says. "Once they learn the curriculum for the grade level they are teaching, they are reluctant to start all over again with a new grade level. This was not as great a problem when our curriculum was based on a basal series."

Suggestions for Improving Training

Many principals have suggestions for improvement of training that has been provided to teachers by central and area office. They feel that the training that was provided was not enough, was too theoretical, and was compacted in too short a time. "New teachers need practical suggestions," says

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4. This is borne out by teachers' comments. In 20 percent of the schools, one or two of the teachers interviewed specifically cited the role his/her principal had played in training, usually indicating that the principal had been instrumental in acquiring training assistance for teachers from central or area office, but did not have a role in conducting the training sessions.

Wilkins. Her colleague Mary Swanson agrees. "New teachers need hands-on ideas," she says. Swanson adds, "Having training sessions the week before school begins is a bad idea. Teachers and principals want to be in their schools getting their rooms ready for the school year."

Most principals feel that after the initial training sessions no attempt is made to recycle teachers through training or train teachers new to their school. "After the initial training, questions arise as teachers begin implementing. There is no one to answer the questions," reports Garcia. Principals in schools with a high teacher turnover rate feel this concern is a major problem for them.

Thirty-four percent of the teachers agree with the principals. They feel they need more training than they have received, training that is more in-depth, follow-up of original training during the school year, and the opportunity to meet with and observe other teachers implementing the curricula. LARC was mentioned most often by teachers as an area in which more training is needed. Also, many teachers stated that they did not receive any training since they were hired after original training sessions introducing the new curricula to the school were conducted, but before the implementation of preservice training for new teachers. Sixty-six percent of the teachers interviewed, nonetheless, feel the training have they received is sufficient.

Adequacy of Materials for Implementing Curricula

Over two-thirds of the principals and one-third of the teachers who were interviewed feel that their schools were not provided with sufficient materials to be able to fully implement new curricula and priorities. The majority feel that more LARC core books are needed. The major problem appears to be that, while initial supplies provided to the schools are somewhat adequate, funds to replace old books or add books as the school's enrollment grows are inadequate. Principals feel frustrated in trying to obtain books that are out of print and in providing sufficient supplies for new classrooms that are added as the school grows. They also feel frustrated in having to take money for core books out of their schools' supplies allocation. "I had to open up a new third grade class last year," says Jerry Swift. "I had only $50 to spend on supplies for this class. It is impossible to buy core books and everything else that is needed for a classroom for $50."

Two-thirds of the principals who feel they have inadequate supplies to support the new curricula want to have autonomy over how resources are supplied to their schools by being in control of their school's budget for instructional materials. The remaining third would like more funds allocated to their schools for instructional supplies, but do not necessarily want to control the budget. Over half of those principals who feel their schools have adequate instructional supplies wish, nonetheless, to have autonomy over their school's budget. A small number of principals feel they have all the autonomy and flexibility they need, and are either able to move money from one source to another as needed, or can get more money from the area office's "discretionary" account by requesting it with sufficient justification.

Central and area office staff who were interviewed indicate that resources are provided to schools based on student needs. These needs are often determined by student performance on standardized tests. However, several central and area office staff indicated that there are discretionary funds that can be used to assist a school with a particular need. They added that it is up to the principal to document these needs in order to obtain the funds.

Principals' Flexibility in Establishing Instructional and Non-Instructional Priorities

Impact of Non-Instructional Priorities on Instructional Priorities

Many principals feel that conflicting demands for their time causes a problem in establishing instructional priorities. Over and over, the same theme is heard from principals regarding instructional leadership: they do not have time because of competing non-instructional priorities. They have increased paper work, reports that must be completed, and requests for information about students and programs in their schools. How do principals prioritize their time? "The needs of my students come first," says Goldstein. "Then come the needs of my staff. Those are my two most important priorities." Two-thirds of the principals agree with Goldstein, but most do not feel that the school system allows them the latitude to let deadlines slip in favor of ensuring that all the needs of students and staff are met.

Only one-fifth of the principals feel they have sufficient latitude to make a choice among the competing priorities. States Luis Garcia, "Things that I feel are of low priority I put on the side. If they are really important, I will get a second request for the information." Many principals use this technique as a way to manage priorities. However, principals seem often to be caught in the middle between central and area office demands, and feel that priorities keep piling up. "There is a joke among principals, that they will soon receive a memo saying they are responsible for the problems in Nicaragua, and they should develop an action plan," reports one principal. What do competing priorities mean in the life of an elementary principal? Over three-fourths of them report that they have no time during the work day when they can quietly sit and reflect or plan for the future.

Establishment of Instructional Priorities

Principals are divided regarding the flexibility they feel the system allows them in tailoring new curricula to the needs of students in their school. Principal Anne Rutherford states, "I have complete flexibility. The curriculum is a guide, not gospel." Sam Shiply disagrees. "I must insure implementation of the curricula according to MCPS policies," he states. One of his colleagues agrees, "The emphasis comes from the area, and there is the sense that you'd better do it." Overall, over half the principals feel they have a reasonable amount of flexibility in curriculum implementation. However, over 40 percent feel they have little or no flexibility at all.

Some respondents feel that there is variation in emphasis placed on what constitutes full curriculum implementation depending on who is interpreting

what is meant by implementation. One area office staff member sums up the general feeling of her colleagues in the area office when she states, "Central office expects principals to dot every i and cross every t in implementing curricula." Central office staff disagree, however, saying that the Program of Studies is suggestive, not prescriptive. Comments one high-level central office staffer, "Principals ought to be given the latitude to determine how curriculum is implemented, and then be held accountable. However, the area office does not treat them as if they are responsible."

Staff at all levels are also divided concerning whether the student composition of the school, community involvement, or special education or impact programs affect the instructional priorities. Two-thirds to three-fourths of the central and area office staff who were interviewed feel that special needs students in the school directly influence instructional priorities. However, a minority of 10 to 15 percent feel that the curriculum is broad enough to accommodate these students while still allowing for implementation. What is meant by implementation of priorities in MCPS could well benefit from examination and discussion.

Eighty-five percent of the principals feel they have enough flexibility to tailor new curricula to the unique needs of students in their schools, but 15 percent feel they have little or no flexibility. States one principal, "They (central and area office) think they are the only experts. They patronize and do not trust principals." A colleague states, "Area and central office enforce and dictate. We have been told what to do. We are not trusted to work out the best ways of implementation with our staffs."

Principals' Input Into Establishment of Systemwide Priorities

Principals by and large feel that their input is not solicited aggressively enough in establishing instructional priorities. Three-fourths of the principals who were interviewed indicate that they have had little or no input in the establishment of instructional priorities. A few principals indicated that their opinions have been sought several times in the past two years. It appears that the same few principals consistently have input.

Systemwide, the only formal mechanism for soliciting input from principals on curriculum matters is the Council on Instruction. Moreover, only a handful of principals participate on that committee at any given time. Nevertheless, one-third of the central office respondents reported that they informally solicit the opinions of principals regarding curriculum implementation.

Use of Test Scores in Establishing Instructional Priorities

Use of test scores in MCPS for monitoring of student performance and implementation of curricula has become more prominent in the past decade. Principals are often placed in the position of having to defend the performance of students in their schools to the community and the press. Principals have problems with the emphasis they feel is placed on test performance by the community, as well as the emphasis MCPS places on test scores when establishing instructional priorities.

Use of Test Scores in Establishing School Goals and Objectives

In addressing instructional priorities, principals are virtually unanimous in feeling that MCPS uses test scores excessively in their deliberations. Use of test scores to establish priorities causes principals to feel that priorities are handed down to them by central and area office, and there is no room for their school staff to develop individual school goals and objectives. "Knee-jerk reactions to test scores lead to new curriculum," says Leroy Jones. His colleague Luis Garcia agrees. "Objectives are dictated by the area office. The school has no time left to work on what they feel are priorities."

Over three-fourths of the principals and teachers feel test scores are used to establish school goals and objectives. While the majority feel this is an appropriate use of test data, they do not feel tests should be the sole determiner of priorities. Many teachers also express the concern that test results play too important a part in Gifted and Talented screening, and that both students and parents get erroneous messages about students' abilities as a result. Some teachers also feel MCPS spends too much time on testing to the detriment of the instructional program.

Many central and area office staff agree with principals that test scores are overused in establishing priorities, but view things from a different perspective. They feel that the establishment of priorities based on test score deficits has caused schools to underemphasize critical aspects of the curriculum due to the time devoted to the priorities. They also are quick to point out that when test scores indicate a problem exists, an attempt is made to provide funds or staff resources to the schools to help solve the problem.

The overwhelming majority of central and area office staff who were interviewed feel that monitoring student performance on standardized tests and other relevant measures is a major priority of principals. However, they also feel principals need assistance in this task. The majority of principals would like assistance from central and area office in interpreting test scores, but do not want staff in these offices to use the scores in a monitoring function.

Use of Test Data to Evaluate Schools

In terms of how schools are perceived by central and area office, principals and teachers feel that test scores are used to evaluate schools and teaching staff. The majority feel that test scores are used to compare schools, whereas they should be used by the schools to do self-assessment, diagnose students' strengths and weaknesses, and prescribe instruction. Sam Shiply states, "The principal has to constantly defend the school." Anne Powers agrees, "MCPS rewards schools that show significant gains. There is little feedback to principals about what the school has achieved otherwise." Matt Henry adds, "If student performance is bad, it can get a principal transferred." Bob Fletcher sums up, "I only hear from the area office when test scores are down."

Responses from central and area office staff show that about two-thirds of them feel they use test scores the way principals and teachers prefer (moni-

toring student performance in specific areas to assess where programmatic improvements are needed or identify students for inclusion in particular programs), and one-third use test scores the way principals and teachers fear (comparison of schools). For the most part, central and area office staff feel that they, individually, use test performance appropriately, but other individuals in central office and the community misinterpret their use.

Anne Powers sums up the feeling of many principals regarding the layers of administration in MCPS to whom they must answer regarding program implementation and monitoring. "The principal should be recognized as the key position in the school. Teachers should be allowed to be professionals and make their own decisions about instruction. The increase in layers between the school board and the classroom is not the answer to our problems."

Staff leadership includes a variety of tasks. It includes the everyday interactions with staff, insuring that staff fulfill their responsibilities on the job on a daily basis, and selection, evaluation and surplus or retention of staff. Principals have many different management styles and techniques for working with staff. Some principals are quite open with their staff and always have an open-door policy. Others are more reserved, but ensure through formal mechanisms that staff have access to them. Except for the rare principal who hides in his/her office, principals demonstrated that they accommodate the needs of their staff.

Principals spend a large proportion of their time in staff leadership activities. Observation data show that elementary principals spent 23 percent of their time on staff leadership and secondary principals spent 22 percent. Individual principals spent from approximately 5 to over 40 percent of their time on staff leadership. Elementary principals who were interviewed indicate that they spend an average of 18 percent of their time in staff leadership activities. Half the elementary principals interviewed would like to be able to spend more of their time on staff leadership. Half the central office staff and one-third of the area office staff interviewed feel that principals spend a lot of their time on staff leadership.

In general, elementary principals are in closer contact with their teaching staff than are secondary principals, especially in the single-administrator elementary school. In secondary schools, the subject matter resource teacher is the first link in the administrative chain and fulfills many of the day-to-day management functions. Nonetheless, principals at all levels demonstrated that they are masters of what some would call "management on the run." They solve many problems with staff or attend to tasks on their way to, or during other activities.

Staff Leadership Styles

Luis Garcia is the sole administrator of his school. While he could find things to do that would keep him in his office all day long, he feels it is important to be in the halls of his school and on the school grounds. "Some people think I'm a do-nothing principal," he says, "because I'm never in my office when they call. But I believe my business is out here. Teachers don't have time to come to my office during the school day if they need something. But, if I stop into their classrooms or pass by in the hall, they can step out for a minute and take care of business." On a 30 second walk from the playground to his office, Garcia solves a problem for the building services worker, pats a teacher on the shoulder and tells him what a good job he did at last night's PTA meeting, and delivers a message to another teacher.[5] Garcia does not have many interruptions when he is in his

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5. The average length of the activities observed in elementary schools was 11.6 minutes. However, many activities were two minutes or less in length. On the average, principals were interrupted once in every five activities, and once in every three activities they took care of two things at once.

office doing paper work. This may be because he has taken care of his staff's needs during his school rounds.

Paul Byron is the principal of a small, but crowded elementary school. His door is always open to teachers and his supporting services staff. He is willing to help his staff out when they need him: he answers the telephone when his secretary is away from her desk, and helps the building services manager lift heavy objects. When students have indoor recess he supervises their play so his teachers can have a duty-free lunch. Byron does not spend considerable time on school rounds. However, his staff feel free to drop in on him and do so frequently. He is well known in MCPS and it is generally felt that he is well liked by his staff.

"I just got back from traffic court," reports one of his teachers mid-morning. "What a mess!" "Yes, I know what you mean," says Paul. "My wife had to go to court last month. She got her ticket reduced by two points." "Is that right?" chimes in another teacher. "When my husband went, he had to pay the full amount." This type of two- and three-way interaction is common in Paul's school, and he is proud of the relationship he has with his staff. When he introduces the evaluation study's observer to his staff, he frequently starts with "DEA is studying the role of the principal. They wanted to observe the best principal in action, so they decided to come here."

While many principals would not encourage this level of interaction on the part of their staff on a regular basis, the feeling staff have in the majority of schools is that if they need to see the principal, they may just drop by. Teachers in over 80 percent of the schools reported that they would just drop by if they needed to see their principal for a few minutes.

Bob Fletcher is not as well known in the school system as is Paul Byron. A quiet, sensitive principal, he is, nonetheless, well liked by his staff. Bob's relationship with his staff is founded on a very different set of behaviors than Paul's. Relationships with his staff members generate a feeling of trust and respect that goes both ways: from principal to teacher and from teacher to principal. "I really liked what I saw in your class today," Bob says to a teacher he has observed earlier in the day. "I especially liked the way you have worked your language objectives into your classroom activities. Tell me, how do you feel about the progress Jimmy is making?"

Bob solicits input from his teachers, and provides constructive feedback, both positive, and when needed, negative. During the majority of the day, Bob's interactions with his staff are task-oriented. However, he makes it a point to eat lunch in the staff lounge and to drop into the lounge after school. "I feel it's very important that my teachers feel they have access to me," he says. When he is in the lounge, Bob's demeanor is very different. He interacts socially, inquires about family members, listens to anecdotes and jokes, and relaxes. Over 40 percent of the principals at each school level who were observed ate lunch with their staff and socialized with them during this time.

Gladys Robinson is a relatively new elementary principal. She is a whirlwind of activity in a very busy, hectic school. The students in her school have many needs. Discipline is sometimes a problem. Gladys doesn't encour-

age teachers to drop in on her when they have a problem. However, she does reserve time during the day to meet with them as needed. Usually, Gladys is at school well before the students arrive, and dedicates the early morning time to meeting with teachers.

Teachers leave notes in Gladys' mailbox requesting time with her, and she schedules appointments with them in the early morning or during the day. She shares this management style with 20 percent of the principals who were interviewed. When teachers come into her office at their scheduled appointment time, Gladys gives them her undivided attention. The teachers are given the feeling that she has as much time to spend with them as they need to solve the problem.

Gladys usually has so much paper work that she eats lunch at her desk while working. (Over one-third of the principals at each school level who were observed had working lunches.) She rarely has time to socialize with her teachers. One area office staff member who was interviewed stated, "New principals are selected on their ability to do everything, and then they try to live up to this image. They are too task oriented, not human relations/people oriented. Teachers can't get access to these principals because they are so busy managing." The interview data tend to support his point of view. One-third of the principals who were interviewed cited staff leadership as an important responsibility. Only one of these principals was a relatively new principal. However, 30 percent of the principals who were interviewed were relatively new to the job.

Henry McMann is a high school principal. Most of his time during the day is taken up in paper work and planned meetings. During the day Henry does not venture forth from the administrative suite. Half of the secondary principals who were observed spent their days primarily in their offices.[6] Most of Henry's resource teachers drop in on him at some point in the day to discuss student schedules, textbook orders, or other curriculum concerns.

After students leave school for the day Henry has a meeting with his resource teachers to discuss minigrant proposals. He solicits proposals from each department, and discusses pros and cons with them. He is an active participant in the proposal planning. The resource teachers leave the meeting with writing assignments in hand. Henry's relationship with his staff is business-like. They respect him and think of him as a very hard worker. Henry sums up his philosophy in this way: "I'd rather not be bothered by much of the bull---- that goes on in MCPS. I have too much to do at school, and I wish they would just let me do what I need to do." He is usually at his school at 6:30 in the morning, and typically stays till after 6:00 at night.

Principal Martha Stevenson is her school's mother figure. Interactions with her staff are of the form of an approving or disapproving parent. Martha

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6. Secondary school principals spent an average of 13.7 minutes on each activity during their observations. They were interrupted once in every six activities, and once in four activities they were observed taking care of two things at the same time. Thus, secondary principals have somewhat more sustained time to spend on activities than do elementary principals.

spends considerable time during the day dealing with issues of control. She is very formal with her staff, and some staff appear to fear her. Martha's school is considered to be a very good school. She has staffed the school with excellent teachers. Parents are very pleased with the school.

Principals' Flexibility in Assigning Staff Work Hours and Duties

Professional Staff

Differences in management style are reflected in how principals feel about the amount of authority they have over professional staff in terms of assigning work hours or duties. Principals are split almost evenly between those who feel they have authority over staff work hours, classroom assignments, or other duties to accommodate the needs of students in their schools, and those who feel they have no authority or flexibility in these areas.

"I have all the flexibility I need to rearrange staff hours and duties, as long as I stay within the contractual agreements and certification requirements," says Luis Garcia. "The area office will usually support me in my decisions so long as I can justify my rationale to them." Leroy Jones disagrees with Garcia. "I don't have any flexibility in staff hours or duties due to the contractual agreements and certification requirements," Jones states. "Also, anything I do I have to justify to the area office." Principals of small schools are united in expressing that the small size of their schools' staffs precludes any flexibility.

Central and area office staff are divided as well. Some feel principals have authority and flexibility, so long as they stay within contractual agreements and certification regulations. Others feel either that principals do not have the authority and flexibility, or that they have this authority but are afraid or unwilling to use it. Positive and negative comments appear to be distributed across all three administrative areas, with some staff in each area feeling principals have the authority and flexibility, and some feeling they do not.

Contractual agreements have been a challenge to principals since the late 1960's when teachers in MCPS went out on strike. Virtually with each negotiated agreement between MCEA and MCPS since that time, more regulations have been added concerning the rights and responsibilities of teaching staff.

Supporting Services Staff

All groups are vocal in stating that the MCCSSE Senior Most Qualified (SQ) regulation has adversely impacted on principals' control over the work hours and duties of supporting services staff. SQ came into being in 1984, and according to principals, has caused considerable problems in staffing.

Staff Evaluation

Evaluation of staff is a large component of the staff leadership function.

Along with the strengthening of negotiated agreements between MCEA and MCPS, changes have been made to the teacher evaluation system. While principals have always had to evaluate their staffs, in the early 1970's MCPS adopted a teacher evaluation system that required formal observations and evaluating of teachers on specific objectives. Many principals see these as unnecessary and time consuming. More positively viewed is the fact that the evaluation system requires that teachers be evaluated on a uniform set of conditions. Principals have some problems with the system as it exists.

Time Constraints

The observation data indicate that staff evaluations consumed about 4 percent of the time of elementary principals during April and May and 2 percent of the time of secondary principals. Add the time spent in observations (observation time was included in instructional leadership), and together, observations and evaluations consumed about 13 percent of the time of elementary principals and 2 percent of the time of secondary principals.[7] Do elementary principals feel this time is well spent? Some do and some don't.

On balance, principals feel that they can use the evaluation system to evaluate teachers who are working within the effective range. They generally feel, however, that the evaluation process takes considerable time, and they wonder if it is really necessary to do such a thorough evaluation of teachers who are working effectively. "I have to spend so many hours observing teachers who are really doing an effective job," says Jim Tate. "While teacher evaluation is the most important aspect of my job in my opinion, I would like to spend more time with those teachers who really need my supervision. The current system does not leave me enough time to do this." Several principals suggested a short evaluation form for the effective tenured teacher, and a long form for the new teacher who needs more guidance and supervision. Principals who are the sole administrators of their schools feel particularly burdened by the evaluation process.

Appropriateness of the Current Evaluation Forms for Professional Staff

Many principals commented on the inappropriateness of the current evaluation form for special professional staff such as curriculum specialists and guidance counselors. Others wondered about the necessity of new growth objectives for each evaluation cycle. And, several principals shared the feeling of Jim Tate regarding the rating scale used in the professional evaluation system. "I would like to be able to identify those staff who are doing a truly superior job," says Tate. "The current system does not allow me to distinguish between my teachers who are superior and those who are doing an adequate job." Finally, several principals commented that the evaluation system should be revised to reflect teachers' implementation of the new MCPS curricula.

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7. Ninety percent of the teachers who were interviewed indicated that they had been formally observed by their principals at least once during the school year. Two-thirds of the teachers had been observed two or three times. The average length of the observations was 35 minutes.

Problems Evaluating Ineffective Teachers

Many principals feel that the teacher evaluation system breaks down when the principal wants to get rid of an ineffective teacher. Some principals feel the process of evaluating out poor teachers is too tedious and time consuming. Some feel it is a no-win situation. Others feel the system is fine if principals would only implement it properly. Moses Washington sums up the feeling of some of his colleagues, "Principals don't have the guts to get rid of incompetent teachers."

Central and area office staff also provide mixed reactions. Some of the central and area office staff interviewed feel the evaluation system is effective, and some feel it is ineffective. When the system fails, they feel it is because of principals' unwillingness or inability to implement it properly. One high-level area office staffer commented, "Principals who want to get rid of poor teachers have a lot of work ahead of them under the current system. I think we ought to provide them with training on how they can more effectively work within the current system."

Appropriateness of the Current Evaluation Form for Supporting Services Staff

One-third of the principals interviewed feel that the supporting services evaluation form is effective, but one-third find it too vague and general. "There is no way for me to indicate the many responsibilities and superior job that my secretary does," says Tate. Many principals cited the new food services worker evaluation form as a substantial improvement, however. Central and area office staff who were interviewed agree in large part with the principals.

Shared Evaluations

Shared evaluations could be a source of problems to principals. However, the results of the observation study show that principals generally have no problems writing joint evaluations for staff they share. Nevertheless, evaluations, and sometimes coordination of time, can be a problem for staff in special education, guidance, and special programs such as ESOL and Head Start. "I really needed the guidance counselor at school last Wednesday," says Wilkins. "But, she was gone all morning in a meeting at central office. She is supposed to be in my school working for me, but central office can jerk her out whenever they want." This feeling that central office assumes too much power and control over staff in the schools is shared by many principals.

Principals' Control Over Staffing Decisions

Many principals indicated that the quality of the staff they have to work with in their schools impacts on their role as supervisor. The major feeling expressed by the principals was that they could not run their schools effectively if they have no control over staff that are placed in or removed from their schools. Over one-third of the principals who were interviewed feel that staffing the schools should be done by them and no one else. Approximately one-sixth of the central and area office staff agree that lack

of control over staffing robs principals of the authority they need to run their schools. Only half of the principals feel they have sufficient control over staffing in their schools.

The SQ feature of the current negotiated agreement with MCCSSE is denounced almost universally by principals, area, and central office staff as causing staffing problems in schools. "I got some instructional assistants this year who had never had contact with children before," says Moses Washington. "They were completely unqualified for the job." "The SQ placement and advertising requirements have meant that I have been without a secretary for almost two months," adds Gladys Robinson. "My secretary was transferred to another school, and now I have to play the waiting game." Regarding secretaries, Max Goodwin states, "It's ludicrous that I cannot hire my own secretary. She and I are the only two people in the administrative office. My ability to get along with her and feel that I can trust her is critical."

Feelings about professional staff were also strongly expressed by principals. While many principals feel that selection of professional staff is effective in MCPS, several principals commented that the personnel procedures, including the hire codes and the paper work involved, are confusing and burdensome. Several principals suggested that personnel solicit more input from principals when screening and selecting teacher candidates. States Marge Goldstein, "The current teacher selection system emphasizes glibness and verbal fluency. I think we lose some good people who just don't interview well, and sometimes we are fooled into taking someone who doesn't shape up in the long run."

Central and area office staff generally feel that now that MCPS is in a hiring mode, teacher selection has improved. They recognize that principals had a difficult job in selecting staff in the past while MCPS was in a period of declining enrollment. Nevertheless, principals continue to feel that surplus of staff, involuntary transfers, and administrative placements are a problem to them.

"I try to get in there early," says Tate, "and select my teachers before the surplus lists come out. If I wait too long, I will get stuck (with a staff member I do not want)." It is just this attitude, according to one high-level area office staffer, that creates problems. "I see principals selecting teachers I know they will be unhappy with, and I try to discourage them from taking these people," he says. "But, they are in such a rush to fill their staff allocations. They think they will get a bad staff member dumped on them. This is not so. Last year we only made three or four administrative placements." It is the feeling among many principals, nonetheless, and it is echoed by between one-third and half of the central and area office staff, that surplussed staff and administrative placements continue to be a problem in MCPS.

For whatever reasons, it is clear that staff in MCPS have quite different perceptions concerning the extent to which problems exist in selecting and maintaining quality staff.

School climate is the catch-all phrase that encompasses all kinds of activities and messages, verbal and nonverbal, that influence how students feel about school and themselves. Over the past decade school climate has received increased attention with the emphasis that has been placed on school effectiveness, minority achievement, and inequities in dropout rates and student suspensions. Some principals are masters at creating positive school climates, and others could use some help. None of the principals who were interviewed cited fostering a positive school climate as one of their major responsibilities, but almost half of the principals feel that if they had more time in the school day they would like to spend it interacting with students.

Principals spend an average of ten percent of their time fostering school climate. This percentage is consistent across the interviews of elementary principals, observations of elementary principals, and observations of secondary principals. Additionally, secondary principals spend approximately another 4-5 percent of their time on paper work and organizational activities necessary to plan for formal recognition of students in assemblies and other awards events.

The variation among individual principals in their emphasis on school climate is great. Elementary principals who were interviewed reported that they spend from 1 to 20 percent of their time on school climate; the range for elementary principals who were observed was from 2 to 28 percent of their time; and for secondary principals it was from 0 to 30 percent.

Ways in Which School Climate is Fostered

It is 8:00 in the morning and students are getting off the bus that has just arrived at Sleepy Meadow Elementary School. Music is playing softly in the entrance to the school and in the halls. "I feel that quiet music has a settling effect on the students as they come into school," says Bart Green, principal. "I use music a lot to set the mood." Later in the morning, Green's assistant principal will make the morning announcements and choose a "patriotic song of the day" to be played over the p.a. system.

After most of the students have entered school, Green begins his hall cruise. "I like students and staff to know that I'm around," he says as he hurries two straggling girls on to class. He bends down to pick up a piece of stray paper and continues on down the hall. As he proceeds on his cruise, he checks out the condition of a broken heater that is being repaired in one classroom, and stops in on his class of emotionally impaired students. "I can usually tell by how they are first thing in the morning, what kind of day it is going to be around here," he says. It is difficult to believe that there are over 800 students in this school. Students have gone into their classrooms and settled down to business. Although the school is overcrowded and has portable classrooms, one does not get the feeling that it is overrun by students.

Paul Byron is standing in the hall outside his office watching the students go upstairs to their classrooms. "David, it's so nice to see you walking in

line today," he says. "These kids are the best in the county," Paul tells the observer in a voice loud enough for the students to hear. A sixth grade girl passes by, and Paul stops her. "They're really improving in their behavior coming into school, don't you think?" he asks the girl. Paul explains to the observer that they had a real problem with students pushing and running when they came into school in the morning earlier in the school year. Paul has been working with his Student Government on ways to improve students' behavior on line. The sixth grader is president of the Student Government.

Anne Powers is in her office when students arrive at her school. The students must remain on the school bus until the bell rings, because teachers have been complaining about students roaming the halls during their early morning preparation time. Anne is drawing a map of her community for Kindergarten Round-up day, and continues this activity as students come into the school and go to class.

Felicia Henderson is greeting students outside her office door as they come into her school. Bulletin boards on the walls contain student work that was prepared for her school's International Week which just ended. More art work hangs from the hall's ceiling. "We had such a good time," she says to the observer. "Parents had such beautiful costumes, and the food they brought...!" Felicia is nearing retirement, and is somewhat reserved as a person, but this does not stop students from running up to her to show her class projects they are bringing to school, tell her what happened at home last night, or just to say good morning.

Ralph Harvey is having a meeting with his Student Government. They are planning an end-of-the-year talent show. They talk about the program, the acts that will be performed, and refreshments. A group of boys who are in a resource room in the school are going to do a dance. They have come in to practice their dance, but have forgotten their music. Ralph scolds them, "Don't you know you're wasting everyone's time by coming in here unprepared? I knew I couldn't count on you. I never can. Let's see the dance now. You'll just have to do it today without the music." The boys decide to withdraw from the talent show.

Matthew Morgan is the principal of a junior high school. He is planning to recognize students who are on the honor roll later in the day. When the observer arrives in the morning, Matthew is signing Principal's Honor Roll award certificates for the honorees. He has scheduled three meetings with students during the day, one for 7th graders, one for 8th, and one for 9th. Each honoree will have his/her name read by the principal and will come up and get the certificate, juice, and cookies. Formal recognition of student achievement in academics, sports, and other extracurricular activities is a major way of fostering school climate in secondary schools.

Pete D'Amico is the principal of a large high school. It is almost the end of the year and he feels it has been an especially good one at his school. He has ordered cake from the food services staff, and will spend each lunch period personally handing out cake to students. As students come up to him for cake, they ask why he is doing this. "It's my way of saying thank you to you students for giving me such a good year," he says. The students stand a little taller, smile at him, and say "Thanks!" D'Amico genuinely likes his students. Earlier in the day he had broken up a fight between two

boys, both of whom outweighed him by about 50 pounds and stood a head taller than him. When the observer expressed concern for his safety he replied, "Not those boys. They're good kids. They had just gotten a little excited, that's all."

It is 7:30 A.M. on a Monday morning and the tension can be felt in the air at Willow Ridge High School. It hangs heavy in the air, and is visible through the tears of students and faculty alike. Over the weekend, one of the students in the school committed suicide. Some of the students and staff heard the news over the weekend, but many hear it for the first time as they enter the school building. Sam Williams, principal, has marshalled the resources of the school, area office, and community to help the students and staff get through this tragedy. Sam, his assistant principals, guidance counselors, teachers, area office psychologists and social workers, as well as local parents who have expertise they can bring to the situation, spend the day meeting with groups of students to discuss suicide and how they feel about the student who has taken his life.

Relationship of School Climate and Student Guidance

In fostering school climate, principals often find themselves in situations such as Sam's, in which they have to provide guidance to students. Even though Sam has six guidance counselors at his school, the severity of the problem that the school is going through necessitates his assisting in the student guidance activities as well. Elementary principals are often faced with the need to provide guidance to students, and sometimes their parents too. Many elementary schools are without guidance counselors, and those elementary schools that have counselors usually have so many students with problems that one counselor could not possibly handle the full load by him- or herself.

Elementary principals who participated in this study's interviews reported that they spend an average of five percent of their time on student guidance activities. In the observations of elementary principals, one percent of their time was devoted to student guidance, however, one-sixth of these principals spent between three and six percent of their time on guidance activities. At the secondary level, principals were observed spending three percent of their time on student guidance.

Principals' Perceptions of the Importance of School Climate

School climate is fostered in many different ways in the schools, and seems to vary with the management style of the principal. The observation data indicate that some principals feel the most important part of their job is to be in direct contact with students for as much of the day as possible. They talk to students, play with them, and observe their work in class on a daily basis. Other principals use more formal mechanisms of fostering school climate: assemblies, special events such as International Night, or artistic displays throughout the school. Elementary principals were observed more often in direct contact with students and secondary principals were observed more often in the formal settings of assemblies and special events. Generally, most principals made an effort to foster a positive school climate for students and staff alike.

Discipline Styles

How discipline is handled, and what behaviors require student discipline varies not only between school levels, but also among principals within a specific level. In some schools, even while discipline is being meted out, respect for individuals is evident. In other schools this is not the case.

George Clark is principal of Fair Lane Elementary School. While Fair Lane is a small school, it has many students who are eligible for free breakfast and lunch. George spends a good part of his early morning monitoring students who are eating breakfast in the lunchroom. "I want you to just quiet down," he screams. "I could hear you at the other end of the school. If you don't know how to behave, I guess you'll have to be taught at recess time." George uses these threats often in attempting to quiet the students.

George eats lunch in the student lunchroom to keep the students in control at that time as well. Although there is a lunchroom aide in the room, George does the dismissing of students for recess, not letting a table be dismissed until there is absolutely no sound coming from any of the students. For the most part, the students are unaffected by George's behavior, and consider his actions as somewhat of a joke.

Luis Garcia is meeting with two boys who have been brought to his office by the playground aide. Both boys were caught beating up another boy. One of the boys is in the class for emotionally impaired youngsters and the other is in a level 4 special education class. These boys have a history of problems. Luis is especially agitated because the child they have attacked today is the son of a parent who has complained to the area office several times this year about how he has been treated in school. Nonetheless, Luis deals with the two boys even-handedly. He investigates the problem by hearing all sides of the story, and extracts promises from the youngsters that they will behave.

Loretta Wilkins shares Garcia's respect for students. At 3:15 P.M., a parent arrives at Wilkins' office unannounced, to complain about several children who have been harassing her son John on the way home from school. Loretta talks with the boy. "John," she says gently, "you know that you have been in my office many times this year yourself. However, I know that you and I have made an agreement that whenever you have to come in here, you will tell me the truth. Do you want to tell me what has been going on?" Wilkins has established an atmosphere in which John feels that his word will be accepted because of the "deal" that he and the principal have. He smiles and nods, and tells Wilkins how several boys have been chasing him through the creek each day on the way home from school. He assures Wilkins that he has told her the whole truth.

At Anne Rutherford's school, three boys from a level 4 class have been brought to the principal's office because they have flooded the bathroom. It appears that they have flushed a movie projector light bulb and paper towels down the toilet, trying to stop up the plumbing. The general level of agitation suggests that they have succeeded in their mission. Rutherford scolds the boys. "Why did you do that?" she asks. "Don't you see how much

work you have made for Mr. Jones?" (Mr. Jones is the school's building services manager.) She then makes them wait in her office while she calls their parents. After talking to the boys' parents Anne escorts them back to their classroom. At the classroom door, within earshot of several students, Rutherford scolds the classroom aide. "You know you are never to let more than one student go to the bathroom at a time! Why were all three boys out of the room at the same time?" she asks. The aide has no answer.

Time Spent on Discipline

The amount of student discipline principals have to perform varies considerably with the student population of the school. Principals of J/I/M level schools spend more time on student discipline matters than either elementary or high school principals. The observation data show that elementary principals spend an average of 4 percent of their time in student discipline. J/I/M principals spend an average of 16 percent of their time on student discipline, and high school principals spend an average of 6 percent of their time in this way.

Percentages for individual elementary principals varied from a low of 0 to a high of 21 percent of their time spent on discipline. For J/I/M principals the range was 1 to 37 percent, and for high school principals it varied from 1 to 12 percent. Elementary principals who were interviewed reported that they spend an average of 8 percent of their time on student discipline. While 85 percent of these principals spend 10 percent or less of their time on student discipline, a small number of elementary principals reported spending up to one-third of their time on discipline matters. Almost one-fourth of the principals who were interviewed would like to spend less time on discipline.

Special Discipline Problems in Secondary Schools

At Frosty Acres Junior High School, principal James Carver has just finished supervising students' arrival at school and the movement of students to their first period classes. Because of the central location of the lockers at Frosty Acres, there can be as many as 500 students congregating in one small area at the beginning and end of the school day, and during each change of classes. Carver and his assistant principals monitor this location at all these times. As Carver is returning to his office, one of the building services workers informs him that a pipe has been torn from the wall in a boys' bathroom, and the room is flooded. Carver examines the damage and tells the building services worker to shut off the water and lock that bathroom. Carver's sigh indicates that this kind of problem is familiar to him.

Enroute to Carver's office, it is possible to overhear one of the assistant principals disciplining a student for eating a life saver on the soccer field. In another assistant principal's office, a student is being informed that his math teacher has complained about his behavior in class. The assistant principal pleads with the youth to try to keep his mouth shut in math class. The boy replies, "The only way I can keep my mouth shut in there is if you give me permission to fall asleep in class."

Principal Henry McMann McMann is dealing with several students who have been suspended from his high schhigh school during the past week. Four boys were suspended due to an incident that it that occurred at the Friday night dance. They had left the school during the dg the dance, and were in the parking lot near one of the boys' car. The security curity guard had found them there, and discovered an empty cardboard beer carton in rton in the car. Although no beer was found, the boys were suspended for alleged drleged drinking of alcoholic substances.

Pete D'Amico is having having a conference with a student and her family. The student was suspended fended for lighting fire crackers in the school. "Ask my boyfriend to come in here in here," she shouts. "He'll tell you I couldn't have set off the fire crackers. Wers. We were in his car necking at the time they were set off." Later in the same e same day, D'Amico has to come to some decision regarding whether a boy who was ca was caught setting fire to the school will be allowed to return after his suspens suspension period is over. The youth has missed two weeks of school just before finfore final exams, and his mother is concerned that he will not be able to pass his ms his exams. After several meetings with teachers and the boy's guidance counselocounselor, as well as several phone conversations between D'Amico and the area offrea office Pupil Personnel Worker, all parties agree that it is best if the boy be boy be excused from school for the two weeks remaining in the school year. The st The student's report card grades will reflect the grades he has earned to date indate in his classes. "I think it would set a bad example for other students to see to see Tony returning to school this year after what he has done," D'Amico explai explains. "Besides, I think his mother should deal with him at this point." ."

Factors That Affect Princt Principals' Discipline Responsibilities

An interesting finding ending of this study is that the amount of time principals spend on developing a ping a positive school climate has a relationship to the amount of time they spaney spend on discipline matters. For elementary schools, time spent on school climool climate correlates -.22 with the amount of time spent on discipline. In secoin secondary schools, the correlation is -.43. Both of these correlations are sn are statistically significant. Thus, the more time principals spend on school school climate, the less time they spend on student discipline.

The majority of the principhe principals who were interviewed feel that having special programs in their schoor schools such as level 4 or level 5 special education programs, ESOL, Chapter hapter I, or Head Start adds to the discipline problems in the school. While there there was no significant relationship between the amount of time these principalsncipals reported that they spent on discipline and whether or not they had level 4, rvel 4, level 5, emotionally impaired, or ESOL programs in the school, there was ge was a significant positive relationship between the presence of Chapter I aner I and Head Start programs and self-reported amount of time spent on student disent discipline. The correlation between the school having a Chapter I program and an and reported time spent on discipline was .38, and the correlation between Heeen Head Start and reported time spent on discipline was 0.34. These correlations ations did not hold up for schools with Chapter I or Head Start programs that were it were part of the observation study, however.

A large proportion of the of the central and area office staff who were interviewed feel that the presence ofence of special programs in the schools can have an impact on the amount of time principe principals must spend in student discipline. However,

only 16 percent of the central and area office staff who were interviewed feel principals have to spend a lot of their time on discipline.

Ways Principals Maintain Discipline

Principals were observed using many different ways to maintain discipline in the school. At the elementary and J/I/M level, visibility of administrators in the halls, cafeterias, and playgrounds is used as a preventive measure. The observation data show that over one-third of the elementary principals actively monitored the loading and unloading of busses that arrived at their schools on a daily basis, and almost three-fourths of the J/I/M principals took turns in serving bus duty. However, only one high school principal was observed monitoring the bus lot.

Half the elementary principals, practically all of the J/I/M principals, and half the high school principals were observed monitoring the student cafeteria on a regular basis during lunch periods. Twenty-five percent of the high school principals monitored the outside grounds of their schools on a regular basis, and one-third of the elementary principals monitored outdoor recess on a regular basis.

Clearly, schools vary tremendously in the type of infractions that are brought to the principal for disciplinary action and in the action that is taken as punishment for the discipline.

A principal's relationship with the community can often make a difference in how smoothly things are allowed to function in the school. A strong relationship between the PTA and the school can mean unlimited assistance in the form of parent volunteers and fund raising activities. Positive perceptions of the school by the community may be reflected in how the school staff feels about itself and the students, and often in how the school is perceived by other communities or by the area and central office. An unhappy community or set of parents can cause considerable chaos in the life of a principal. The principal may have to deal with parents' complaints to the area or central office, phone calls and conferences with parents, and staff unease caused by a lack of support from the community.

Interactions with Parents

"I feel behind the eight-ball in dealing with my community these days," says Mike Miller. "When I first came to this school 10 years ago, the community was not at all involved in what went on at the school. Today, I have a younger, more vocal set of parents who want a say in what goes on at the school." Marge Goldstein shares similar concerns. "When I first came to this school several years ago," she says, "the PTA was entrenched. They ran this school. The community was polarized: those who were with the PTA and those who weren't. The most difficult job I had the first year I was here was to convince the parents that I was the school's principal. There were a lot of unhappy parents the first couple of years I was here, but now I have a very supportive PTA with over 70 parent volunteers in the school. They realize that their children are getting a quality education and they're happy to let me run the school."

Mary Wadsworth is in a meeting with her school nurse, trying to arrange for eyeglasses for a needy child. The telephone rings. It is a phone call from a parent who wants information about the magnet program at her school. The conversation takes 20 minutes, which, according to Wadsworth is typical. "I enjoy having the magnet program at my school," she says, "but it means that I must have a lot of interactions with my community and parents from other communities as well. This phone call was not unusual. Parents want to make sure the magnet program is right for their children." Mary has invited the parent to come to the school with her child, and will spend additional time with them when they come.

The observation and interview data show that elementary and secondary principals spend similar amounts of time interacting with parents. Elementary principals spent 8 percent of their time in parent conferences and phone calls, and secondary principals spent 6 percent of their time this way. Fifteen percent of the principals would like to spend less time interacting with parents.

Impact of Vocal Parents

Interactions with vocal parents are identified by staff at all levels in MCPS as part of a principal's job. One-fourth of both central and area

office staff who were interviewed cite parent conferences and phone calls as major consumers of principals' time. Seventy percent of the central and area office staff who were interviewed feel that involvement of parents affects what happens in the school. Gifted and talented and special education were specifically cited by respondents as areas in which parental input has affected instructional priorities.

A small number of principals, teachers, and central and area office staff feel that parental input is positive, in that it helps identify priorities and provides a means for flow of information both to and from the school. They also indicated that parental input can affect how resources are divided among schools. About one-fourth of the principals and central and area office staff feel that parents have too much input in the schools, and it is up to the principal to control the impact this input has on instruction.

Principals who were interviewed are divided regarding their perceptions of parental input on instructional priorities. One-third feel that parental input affects instructional priorities, and two-thirds feel it does not. Half the principals feel they have average or less than average input from their parents, while half feel input in their schools is more than average. Nonetheless, most of the principals feel that the interactions they have with parents are positive, and that the parents are concerned and supportive of the school.

Teachers reflect the opinions of their principals. In terms of whether parent concerns affect the instructional priorities in their school, half say "yes" and half say "no." Three-fifths of the teachers feel they receive an average number of phone calls, letters, and visits from parents, one-fifth feel they receive an above-average amount, and one-fifth a below-average amount.

While principals nationwide deal with forming positive relationships with their communities, there is a feeling among many staff in MCPS that the communities served by this school system have more vocal parents and parents who are more active participants in their children's education than is typically found nationwide. These comments from teachers illustrate the feeling of some MCPS staff towards parental input. "Parents dictate when and how subjects are taught." "Parents freely express their opinions about the school's programs, etc. It takes a very strong principal to listen to both parents and staff and implement what is best for the students." "Our school has very high pressure parents." "Parents dictated to the area the make-up of classes at the school, and the school complied."

Different Community Problems Observed Today

While some staff may feel MCPS has excessive parental input, as the population served by MCPS evolves over time, principals are encountering a set of community problems that they have not had to deal with in the past. Students now come to MCPS schools from families in distress due to divorce, drugs, poverty, and sometimes, mental illness. Montgomery County is following the national trend which shows more fragmented families and families in need of assistance from social welfare groups. The school has become an agency to which the family turns for support. Some may identify problems of poverty and abuse with schools in Area 1. However, the problems are evident

in Areas 2 and 3 as well.

One high-level area office person draws the analogy between the role of the elementary principal and the Parish Priest of the past. He says, "In the town where I grew up, anyone who had a problem went to the Parish Priest. If a woman had problems with her husband, she went to the Priest. If a child was having problems, the parents took him to the Priest. Today, the elementary school principal is getting the problems that used to be taken to the parish priest."

Chester Parnell is just finishing making morning announcements in his school when a teacher comes into the general office with a student who appears to have bad burns all over his arms. Chester calls the student's mother, with the intention of having her come to school to get her child. However, the family has no car, and Chester takes the student home. The child comes from a family with minimal financial resources. "Are you aware of the medical help and other help you can get from Montgomery County?" Chester asks the mother. After a long discussion with the student's mother, Chester returns to school. He has been gone one hour.

Marge Goldstein is standing in the hall of her school watching the students come into school. One girl comes in wearing what looks like just a vest with no other clothes underneath. It turns out that she is wearing shorts, but they are so short they cannot be seen under the vest. She has no shoes. The temperature is about 50 degrees. "Who helped you get dressed this morning? Goldstein asks the girl. "Nobody," she replies. "Did you have breakfast?" asks Marge. "No," is the reply. "Did you bring lunch?" Again, the answer is "No." Marge spends the greater part of the morning filling out a child neglect form and talking on the telephone to the area office staff and the Department of Social Services trying to get assistance for the girl. "There isn't a week that goes by that I don't have to deal with Social Services," says Goldstein. "We have had cases of rape, child abuse, neglect, you name it, this year."

Luis Garcia agrees. "My school population runs the gamut," he says, "from very poor to rather affluent. Sometimes I feel I have to protect the more affluent students who aren't as street-wise, from the poorer, more aggressive students. The poorer students see so much at home that the other students don't even know exists." In a school across the county Helen Ames is dealing with another problem. A child has come to school with a $100 bill. Helen calls the child's mother to inform her of this situation, and is told by the mother, "I don't care. It's his money. If he wants to bring it to school and lose it, that's his problem."

In another part of the county, Bart Green has just admitted a mother and child to his office. The child is being enrolled in school that day. Bart asks the mother who is in the family. Upon hearing that the mother is a single parent, Bart asks, "Who has custody of Joey?" The mother looks a little uncomfortable, and Bart quickly explains that the reason he has asked the question is to find out who is entitled to pick Joey up after school. There have been two kidnappings of children by non-custodial parents this school year at Bart's school, and he does not want to have a third. Joey's mother replies that she has custody, and only she or Joey's babysitter will be permitted to pick him up after school.

Twenty percent of both central and area office staff who were interviewed cite dealing with the community as taking up large amounts of principals' time. Principals who were interviewed reported that they spent an average of 8 percent of their time on community concerns such as those described above, or on more routine community activites such as meetings with PTA's or other community groups. Forty percent of the principals interviewed feel dealing with their community is an important job responsibility. Over 10 percent of the principals would like to spend more time on community relations. Elementary and secondary principals who were observed spent 3 percent of their time on community concerns.

Community Building Use

Another major way that principals in MCPS interact with the community is through community use of the school buildings before school, after school, and on weekends. Some schools in MCPS are designated as community schools, which means that funds are available to the school to hire someone part time to coordinate community use of the school. Community schools have heavy use by various recreation departments, sports leagues, day care, and adult education programs. Other schools, not designated as community schools, also have community groups that use the premises. The amount of community use varies, but some schools are used almost as heavily as community schools without having the benefit of a community coordinator.

"I feel that my school belongs to the community," says Mary Wadsworth. "The only problem is that I don't have the staff to take care of all the coordination and paper work. My secretary is over-burdened, and this is just one additional thing for her to do." Most principals agree with Wadsworth. While they feel that community use of the school buildings is desirable, their number one complaint is that in schools without community coordinators, the burden of coordination of use, scheduling, and finances falls on the secretary. Sixty percent of the principals who were interviewed expressed this complaint.

Over half the principals feel that having community groups in the school in the evening or on weekends causes additional cleaning or deprives them of maintenance staff during part of the school day. "When my building services worker stays late in the evening because of (community) building use, he comes in late in the morning to make up for it," complains Martha Stevenson. "Then, if I or one of the teachers need to have help lifting something heavy, we have to wait for him to get around to it. Secondary schools don't have this problem because they have more support staff."

Almost one-fourth of the principals indicated that their teaching staff is often displaced from classrooms or the media center when community groups use the building. And, one-fourth feel personally responsible for the people in their buildings even though they are not in charge of the programs. Elementary principals reported that they spend less than one percent of their own time, on the average, on community building use. This finding is supported by the observation data.

Community Perceptions of the School

One remaining aspect of the relationship of principals and the community is the principal's perception of how the community views the school. How do most principals feel their schools are viewed by their community? The majority of the principals feel that parents support the school and feel that the school is doing a good job. Nevertheless, principals feel that many parents and other community members use test scores as the only measure of how good their school is. Teachers and central and area office staff agree. The overwhelming majority feel that schools with high performing students are considered "good schools" and schools with low performing students are "bad schools." One principal put it this way: "Good scores mean good schools, and poor scores mean poor teaching." The feeling among many principals, central office and area office respondents is that test scores are the only pieces of information used by parents to compare schools, and that many parents use test scores as the criteria upon which decisions about real estate are based.

Principals of schools with large numbers of low-scoring students often feel pressured that their schools are not "measuring up." This comment from a teacher illustrates the pressure that principals feel and displace on the shoulders of their staff: "I have been in meetings where scores were displayed to the entire faculty and pointed remarks were made to specific teachers." Loretta Wilkens shares the concern of this teacher regarding the pressure test scores can have on teachers. "My third and fifth grade teachers are paranoid," she says. States one of her teachers, "I am a third grade teacher. I try to teach as much of the third grade curriculum in the first two months of school as I can." Matt Henry has observed this feeling among his teachers as well. "My teachers feel the pressures of tests," he says. "They are afraid to do anything creative, like a play, for fear of taking away from the 'real' curriculum."

With the passing of P.L. 94-142 in 1974, school systems nationwide had to come to grips with the educational challenge of serving handicapped students who had previously been institutionalized or served in private programs. MCPS has its share of these programs, and in addition, provides special services to students who are not designated as handicapped but who are judged by the system as needing instruction over and above that provided in the regular classroom (e.g. Chapter 1, Headstart, ESOL, and Gifted and Talented). In elementary schools the management of these programs is typically the responsibility of the principal. All MCPS schools have special programs for students which provide services in addition to those provided in the regular instructional program. Some also have special small classes made up entirely of students who are not able to function effectively in the regular MCPS classroom.

Burdens of Special Programs

Special programs in the school cause additional work for principals. There is added paper work, testing, coordination of programs during the school day, meetings with parents, school staff and central and area office, and interactions with students who have special health, learning, or behavior problems. All of these things must be fit into the routine school day along with the regular MCPS instructional priorities and mandates. The elementary principals who were interviewed and observed had an average of four special programs in their schools in addition to levels 1-3 resource and speech services. Almost 20 percent of the schools had six or more special programs. At the secondary level, where additional staff are often provided to manage special programs, over 50 percent of the schools had fewer than four programs. Few schools had six or more special programs. Elementary principals are vocal in their expression of the burdens of special program students in the school.

"I'm going back to the classroom next year," replies Sally March. "I'm burned out by all the paper work, students' severe needs, and drain on the staff caused by such an intensive handicapped program." March's staff support her and see her as a principal who is overwhelmed by the demands their school's level 5 program places on her and the school. Max Greenberg is principal of a large school with many disadvantaged students. "Each special needs student takes at least twice the time as 'regular' students," he states. His colleague, Billy Marshall adds, "ESOL students present other problems. So many language groups are represented in my school that it is very difficult to communicate with all the parents."

Matt Henry has just gotten off the telephone with a parent who was questioning the purpose of the CRT's. She wanted to know whether her son's placement in instructional groups next year would depend on how well he did on the CRT's. "This is a very high-pressure parent," says Matt. "The boy is a nice kid, bright. But the mother feels he always has to be the best. Last year she was upset because he was in the second-highest math group based on his California results. You'd better believe that if I had told her we were using the CRT's for instructional grouping, she would have managed somehow to get a copy of the test so that her son could have a perfect score!"

Problems caused by special needs students tend to fall in a few specific areas according to the principals. One-third mention additional paper work caused by the presence of special needs students in their schools, and one-third feel discipline problems are greater with these students in the school. Almost half of the principals state that additional time is needed to meet with staff regarding students' needs, and one-third say they and their staff need to spend more time preparing instructional programs for these students. Principals with level 4 or 5 classes in their schools feel especially burdened by EMT's, SARD's, 60 day reviews, and annual reviews. "I have been doing 60 day and annual reviews two days a week for the past seven weeks," says March. Over half the princpals mentioned these procedures as time consuming.

Over one-third of the principals who were interviewed cite additional time that is needed to meet with parents of special needs students. Transportation is a also serious issue for principals of level 4 and level 5 students, since often these students travel quite a distance between home and the school. "I have to spend extra time on my E I (emotionally impaired) program," states Billy Wilcox. "The students need individual attention, more counseling, discipline. I must spend more time on parent concerns and transportation."

About one- sixth of the principals feel they and their staffs have not been adversely affected by having special programs in their schools. None of these principals has level 4 or level 5 classes in his/her school.

Staffing Needs Resulting from Special Programs

Staff at all levels in central and area office appear to be in agreement that the special needs of students in the school directly impact on the school and the staff. They cite students from disadvantaged environments who might need special help in skills, guidance services, and family help, as well as students from affluent areas who need special academic programs. Just about every special program offered in MCPS schools is cited by some staff member as a reason why the school might feel an impact. Additionally, 12 percent of the area and central office staff interviewed feel principals spend a lot of their time in EMT's.

Many principals feel that staffing of elementary schools should be based on both number and type of students in the school, not just on numbers alone. "I don't mind having these level 5 students in my school," says Loretta Wilkens. "I think they are a positive impact on the school and the students. However, I do not have an assistant principal. There is a school down the road with 20 more students that has an assistant principal. The principal there doesn't have half the EMT's, SARD's, IEP's, annual reviews, parent meetings, etc. that I have to deal with." Overall management of staff can also be a problem. One principal stated it this way: "I have over 20 additional staff to deal with 40+ handicapped students. And, I have no administrative assistance in my job." Several central and area office staff who were interviewed agree that assistant principals should be assigned to schools with many special needs students and that each elementary school should have a full-time guidance counselor.

Time Spent on Special Program Management

The observation data show that elementary principals spend over five times the amount of time on special program management as do their secondary counterparts. Elementary principals who were observed spent 11 percent of their time on special programs, whereas secondary principals spent 2 percent of their time in this way.

Principals who were interviewed reported spending an average of 10 percent of their time in special program management. While three-fourths of these principals reported that they spend 10 percent or less of their time on special programs, a few spend as much as 25 percent of their time on special program management.

Paper Work

How can principals be made more efficient or effective administrators? Principals reply, "Eliminate or reduce paper work, reporting requirements, and meetings." Principals put the blame on paper work and duplicate requests for information as the cause of the majority of the frustration they feel concerning time that is taken away from instructional leadership. Although 12 percent of the principals acknowledge that there has been an effort in MCPS over the past few years to reduce paper work, the majority of the principals still feel it is a problem. They cite a continuing burden of paper work which is made more burdensome by special projects such as minority achievement reporting (ART, MAP, and PRAT), minigrants, CRT's, and Gifted and Talented screening and identification.

Observations of principals show that both elementary and secondary principals spend an average of 16 percent of their time on paper work. For individual elementary principals the percentage of time ranged from 2 to 34 percent, and for secondary principals, from 2 to 25 percent. Three-fourths of the principals who were interviewed state they would like to be able to spend less time on paper work.

Memos That Are Unclear in Purpose or Response

Half the 42 principals who participated in the study of paper work have received memos from central and area office that were hard to understand or respond to. These memos caused them to have to spend more time than was anticipated in these tasks. "At least once every week or so I receive a memo that I don't understand," says Darleen Powell. "If it is not clear what I am supposed to do, I have to waste my time calling someone in the central or area office for an interpretation."

Duplicate Requests

Duplicate requests for information are also identified as major problems. Over half of the principals who participated in the paper work study and one-third of the princpals who were interviewed said they had received multiple copies of memos or multiple requests for the same information. "Here's a request from central office for my students' participation in extracurricular activities," says Paul Byron. "I just got done writing all that up for my PRAT report!" he exclaims. "Don't you folks talk to one another?" "Look at this," Darleen Powell adds. "Three memos from Gifted and Talented about early identification procedures. I think I could have understood all this if it were put in one memo." Alan Perkins agrees with Powell and goes one step further. "I received three memos from DEA with duplicate information about ordering of tests. And, while I'm on the subject, how about DEA surveys, ... like this one!" Principals also complained about a revised DEA report on CRT performance in which the revisions were small, in the middle of the report, and time consuming to locate.

Too Much Paper Work Associated with Testing and Screening

The new CAT's were cited by principals as generating a lot of paper work. Nineteen percent of the principals who participated in the paper work study would like to spend less time on testing, and 11 percent would like to spend less time on Gifted and Talented program administration/paper work. Almost one-third of the principals who were interviewed agreed they would like to spend less time on testing administration.

Frequency of Requests for Information

Over 60 percent of the principals who were interviewed reported that they had to respond to requests for information from central or area office at least once a week. Another 30 percent had to respond to requests at least once or twice a month. About half the central and area office staff who were interviewed admitted that principals had to spend a lot of time on "administrivia."

According to area office respondents, only about one-third of them regularly request information from the schools. Most staff make requests at most once a week, but a few need information daily. The problem, however, does not seem to be in the number of requests, but rather, the fact that over half of these respondents need the information immediately upon request, or at most in 1 or 2 days. Central office information needs appear to be similar. About one-third of the central office respondents report that they regularly need information from the schools. About one-third need this information immediately when it is requested.

Special Projects

It is not the routine daily paper work needed to keep the school running that provides the paper work burden for principals, but rather, the special projects that come along during the year. Principals cited several requests for information or action that were excessively burdensome to them because of the time they took to complete, the amount of time they had to respond, or the time of year the request was made. The supporting services evaluations were number 1 on the hit parade for both their timing at the end of the school year and the amount of time they took in staff meetings and completion of the forms.

The minority achievement reports (MAP, MAT, and PMAT) as well as minigrant proposals were next in line for generating frustration. Principals feel they are overly time consuming, and in some cases unnecessary. They also feel that this is an instance in which MCPS has tried a solution to a problem and the solution has become institutionalized in perpetuity without further examination of the school system's need for it to continue.

Comments that were received from principals concerning minority achievement reporting and minigrants include the following. "My school has less than 10 minority students, yet I have to spend as much time on this report as schools with 20 percent minority students." "I don't mind the concept; I think we need to monitor minority students' progress. It's the procedures that bother me; the paper work and everything else. We got our hands

alleged for not providing a special lunch for the case when they come to our school." "The minority students in my school are not behind academically. I had to write my minigrant saying we would make them gifted." "We spent a lot of time on last year's minigrant and feel that the activities have been very successful. We want to continue these activities next year, but have been told that we have to do something different if we want to get the money."

Elementary principals who were observed spent 5 percent of their time on minority achievement reports and minigrants, and secondary principals spent 6 percent. Individually, principals spent from 1 to 15 percent of their time on these activities. Two-fifths of the principals who were interviewed would like to spend less time on minority achievement reports, and one-third would like to spend less time on minigrants.

Suggestions for Better Management of Paper Work

"Put memos to us in the format of the management team," suggests Alan Perkins. Several of his colleagues agree. "If we receive our information in management team format, my secretary can deal with a lot of the paper work that comes to us for information purposes. She can determine the people who need to see the memo, as well as what action is required," says Barbara Powell. Paul Byron adds, "If those people at central office want us to convey information to parents in our school bulletins, they should provide a sample text for us to just modify and insert in the bulletin. This would save a lot of time on the part of principals, and each school would be sending home the same information."

In order to help smooth out the reporting cycle during the school year, and to avoid having several large reporting requirements pile up at once, several principals suggested a yearly calendar, which could be kept in the office in MCPS, on which all major data collection and reporting tasks could have to be scheduled throughout the year. "Staff and annual reviews occur at the same time," commented one principal. "This is killing to a principal in a school with many handicapped and disadvantaged students."

Elimination of some of the reports they receive in the year would make a difference to principals. Virtually all principals feel that they currently receive reports from central or area office that are useless or of limited utility. Utility use reports were mentioned by almost two-thirds of the principals who were interviewed as unnecessary reports, and suspension reports were cited by one-third of the principals. Several principals suggested that they did not need to receive final copies of data that they had initially provided to central office.

Staff Needs

Additional staff or changes in staffing procedures were mentioned by several respondents as ways to make principals more effective. Curriculum specialists, guidance counselors, assistant principals, health aides, and additional secretarial support were mentioned most frequently.

The School Secretary

Secretarial assistance is a primary factor in how well the elementary school administrative office is able to function. The majority of the principals who participated in this study had 1.5 secretarial positions assigned to their schools. However, some had 1 position, and some had 2. Most secondary schools have 4 or more secretarial positions. While elementary schools in this study had, in theory, 1, 1.5, or 2 secretarial positions assigned to them, several principals reported lapses in secretarial coverage of weeks or months either due to illness, transfer, or promotion of the secretary. Many principals cited the personnel procedures associated with replacing vacated supporting services positions as quite problematic to them.

Principals who feel their secretaries are efficient and trustworthy delegate much of their routine paper work and routing of information to these staff. When asked what duties his/her secretary performs, over one-third of the principals said, "She assists me in managing the school." "My secretary does the work of seven giants," says Marge Goldstein. Paul Byron agrees. "There are days she doesn't get out of this office for a minute," he says about his secretary. "Did you have lunch today?" he asks her. "Lunch?" she asks. "What's that?" Principals who have had lapses in secretarial coverage, have had to take an unvested secretary due to ill, or whose secretary spends a large part of each day serving as health aide, feel especially hampered in dealing with paper work.

The observation data show that there are many schools in NCPS in which the principal does not have full secretarial coverage of the administrative office for all hours of his/her working day. This situation is caused when the principal works longer than an 8 hour day, which is common in the elementary schools. These principals cannot be fully efficient administrators when their secretaries are not present, because they are interrupted often by the telephone or by requests for information that would normally be directed to the school secretary.[8]

Health Aides

Assignment of a health aide to the school impacts directly on the burden of the elementary school secretary, and thus, indirectly on the principal. Health aides are used in the schools to deal with sick or hurt children, and to dispense medicine to those children on daily medication. Data from the observations of principals indicate that when the school is without a health aide, the burden of these responsibilities falls on the shoulders of the school secretary. Between the hours of 10:00 A.M. and 2:00 P.M., when most students in the school are typically at recess, there can be a steady stream of sick, hurt or crying children to the health room. If the school secretary has to deal with these children, not only is the school's secretarial work not being accomplished, but often the principal is left to answer the telephone or greet visitors to the office.

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8. Secondary principals also work an average of 9 or more hours per day. However, much of this time is spent in evening meetings or activities.

Forty-two percent of the [illegible] of the principals who participated in this study had half- [illegible] of full-time health aides. By comparison, virtually all secondary schools had full-time health aides and nurses for several days per week. (Elementary schools generally [illegible] erally have a nurse half a day per week.) "I have 15 [illegible] medication," says Moses Washington. "Without a health [illegible] rious situation. I am giving out medicine a good part of the day."

Responses of teachers [illegible] chers who were interviewed support the observation data regarding the burden [illegible] on secretarial staff in schools without health aides. Ninety-one percent of the [illegible] of the teachers from schools without health aides report that their schools' secret[illegible] secretaries deal with hurt and sick children. Additionally, between two-thirds [illegible] -thirds and three-fourths of the teachers in schools with health aides report that [illegible] t that their schools' secretaries also deal with hurt and sick children. Fifteen p[illegible] fteen percent of the teachers indicated that parent volunteers help in the health [illegible] health room in their schools.

Assistant Principals [illegible]

The observation data [illegible] ata show that assistant principals help the principal considerably with the ad[illegible] the administrative burden of the school. They generally share the observation and [illegible] ion and evaluation workload with the principal, and also share much of the stude[illegible] student discipline. "I don't know how I would manage without Jerry (the assist[illegible] assistant principal)," says Helen McKenna. "He coordinates the testing program, [illegible] rogram, has responsibility for our migrant, and helps out to special projects [illegible] ojects like the Superintendent's writing awards. Also, when I am over-burdened [illegible] dened with meetings he can also substitute for me at PTA events."

In schools with assistant [illegible] ssistant principals, principals spend statistically significantly less time in [illegible] ne in parent conferences than do their counterparts who are in single-administrator [illegible] inistrator schools. According to the teachers who were interviewed, the majority [illegible] majority of the assistant principals help out with sick or hurt children and all t[illegible] all the assistant principals take responsibility for student discipline.

Principal Bob Fletcher [illegible] cher sums up his feeling about his assistant principal in what might be the most [illegible] most important of their functions. "My assistant principal is a colleague in pla[illegible] in planning and problem-solving. He shares the administrative load, and I don't [illegible] I don't feel I'm here all alone. The kids like him too. When he's out of the scho[illegible] he school for a day, they really miss him. So do I."

Principals who do not [illegible] not have assistant principals in their schools express feeling alone and vulnerable [illegible] vulnerable in the job. "The most difficult part of my job is not having anyone to [illegible] e to let my hair down with," says Leroy Jones. "In a way I'm jealous of my teache[illegible] teachers in this regard. They have each other for support. I have nobody. It [illegible] y. It would be inappropriate for me to rely on a teacher for this kind of support, [illegible] upport, and I don't feel that I can let down my guard to the area office either. [illegible] ther. I'm really an island in the middle of nowhere," Loretta Gilcrease agrees. [illegible] gress. "I don't feel I can be out of the school for very long. There are too many [illegible] o many things happening at this school, and when I'm out there's no administrator [illegible] rator in charge. I feel this is a tremendous responsibility on my shoulders." [illegible] ders." Relatively few elementary schools have assistant principals. All secondary [illegible] condary schools have at least one, and as many as three

assistant principals.[9]

Guidance Counselors

Many elementary schools now have guidance counselors assigned to the school at least half-time. In addition to working with students, parents, and staff, several principals indicated that their guidance counselors are also involved in ENT's. Observation data show that guidance counselors are always included in ENT and SARD meetings as team members. In a few schools counselors handle some of the paper work associated ENT's and SARD's as well. Also observed were counselors who had responsibility for working on minigrant proposals. Many principals expressed the need for a full-time guidance counselor. Teachers report that guidance counselors are involved in student discipline. They also play a large part in parent conferences and working with children with learning problems.

What Staff Would Principals Like?

Principals, when asked what staff they would like if they had a completely free hand, responded in several ways. "I would like to have someone to handle guidance, discipline and parent conferences," says Jerry Swift. Fifteen percent of the principals agree. "I would like an additional secretary," says Max Greenberg. Fifteen percent of Greenberg's colleagues would like additional clerical assistance. "A curriculum specialist would make my job much easier," says Sam Shiply. Fifteen percent of his colleagues agree. Nineteen percent of the principals would like to have their own budget and do their own hiring and allocation of staff. "Give me my own budget and let me do with my school as I wish," says Janet South. "I would hire only master teachers and aides." In addition, 40 percent of the principals would like more classroom staff so they could reduce class size.[10]

Computer Support

In addition to staff, the overwhelming majority of principals feel that a microcomputer would help them be more efficient administrators. All but two principals who were interviewed would like to have a microcomputer and would like training for themselves and their staffs. Areas in which they would like training include word processing, data processing, business/accounting and interpreting computer reports.

Not much is currently provided to elementary principals in computer management of data. They receive test reports and mailing lists for their students. Some also receive lists of their minority students in extracurricu-

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9. Secondary schools have many needs that elementary schools do not have. There are substantially more evening events that secondary school assistant principals handle. Additionally, secondary school students have many more problems than do elementary students, and secondary school assistant principals deal with these as well.

10. Percentages add to more than 100 because several principals gave multiple responses.

lar activities. However, they receive little or no computer support in generating the type of information about their school that area and central office staff usually need. "What I would really like is a centralized data system which I could get access to, and which would be able to generate all the data for my school that central and area office want," comments Leroy Jones. Many of his colleagues agree.

THE PRINCIPAL AND THE CENTRAL AND AREA OFFICE

The relationship between the principal and the central and area office is based on several factors. It is based on the quality of communication between these offices and the schools, how sensitive the principals feel their area office or the central office is about the special or unique needs of the students in their schools, and perceptions of the principals' responsibilities and how well they do their jobs.

Types of Communications

Data obtained from central office interviews indicate that central office staff communicate with principals primarily in regard to curriculum matters. They might send principals updates of curriculum materials or items of information about curriculum. Interactions are generally by memo or through training sessions that might take place infrequently. Principals have considerable interactions with staff in the area offices, however. A specific elementary supervisor and subject matter teacher specialists are assigned to particular elementary schools and work closely with the principal and teachers on curriculum implementation. Elementary principals were observed spending 9 percent of their time communicating with central and area offices, and secondary principals spent 8 percent of their time in this way.

Support Principals Receive When Dealing With Staff

Whether or not principals perceive that they are supported in their decisions concerning staff problems affects how they will probably respond in the future. Many principals feel they are supported in the majority of their decisions by central and area office. However, about one-fifth feel they do not receive adequate support. Those who feel they do not receive adequate support feel the area office does not respond quickly enough, they have to ask several times before they get the help they need, or they do not know where in the line of authority to go with the problem.

If asked to provide support to a principal who is having trouble with a staff member, area office staff say they provide support in the form of demonstration lessons for teachers or instructional materials. They also observe teachers for principals and help resolve problems among staff. Practically all area office staff report they have been asked to help a principal at least once in the past year. Practically no mention was made of support from central office, which indicates that principals generally turn to the area office for assistance with staff. However, 60 percent of the central office staff who were interviewed report that they have been asked to help a principal with a staff member at least once in the past year. If asked to provide support to principals who are having trouble with staff members, they indicate that they provide support in the form of resources or assistance to the principal in working with the staff member, acting as a second observer, or assisting teachers in implementation of curriculum or teaching strategies.

Support Principals Receive When Dealing With Parents

Complaints from parents is another area in which principals want support from central and area offices. Sixty percent of the principals who were interviewed feel they have the area office's support in handling parent complaints. They feel that the area office would either redirect the parent back to the school to deal with the complaint, or that they would attempt to assist the principal by investigating the complaint. However, the remaining principals feel the area office expects them to keep parents quiet, or they feel the area office would side with the parent and make the principal change his/her action.

The following responses are indicative of the problems these principals have regarding area and central office reactions to parent complaints. "The area office would hang me out to dry, then they would ask questions." "Area and central office should be more supportive and assume the school might be correct once in a while, and not always side with the parent." "School employees deserve more credence. Parents have too much authority." "The more complaints the area gets, the worse they think of the principal. They do not want to be bugged."

All principals report that, if a parent were to complain to the area office, they would be required to take action as a result of the complaint. The majority think they would be expected to talk or meet with the parent and resolve the problem. A small number feel they would be required to placate the parent. And, a small number feel that the area office would overreact to the situation and/or become excessively involved in the resolution to the problem.

Teachers' responses indicate that principals pass the solution of the problem down the line to them. Two-thirds believe that they would be asked to take some action as a result of a parent's complaint. Forty percent feel they would be asked to make a change in the child's program or disciplinary action to satisfy the parent. However, the remaining teachers feel their principals would support them in complaints from parents, and would discuss the complaint with them and/or meet with them and the parent to resolve the situation. For the most part, teachers are satisfied with their principal's process for responding to parent complaints. Those few teachers who are dissatisfied are quite vocal, however, in feeling that parents have too much power in running the school system.

Three-fourths of the area office staff who were interviewed received complaints from parents in the past year. The number of complaints they received ranged from under 5 for the year to several a week. How would they handle the complaints? "First I would ask the parent if he or she had discussed the problem with the principal or teacher," commented one area office staff member. Only one-third of the area office staff said that they would first ask the parent if he/she had discussed the problem with the principal or teacher before they interceded in the problem. "I would call the principal immediately to discuss the problem," replied another area office staffer. Over half the area office staff would call the principal themselves, and might get involved in meeting with all concerned parties. A few would take the problem immediately to their supervisor in the area office. Those who would take the problem to a higher level in the area office would be viewed by principals as non-supportive. And, depending on

the type of interaction the middle group of staff have with principals, they might be viewed either as supportive or non-supportive.

Sixty-one percent of the central office respondents and school board members had received complaints from parents regarding a principal or teacher in the past year. Forty percent would redirect the parent back to the school principal to solve the problem, but practically 40 percent would refer the parent to the area office, bypassing the principal.

Support in School Closures and Consolidations

Four-fifths of the principals who were interviewed indicate that they have been involved in either school closures, boundary changes, or consolidations in the past. Area and central office staff provided a transition team to 50 percent of these principals to assist in coordinating the closure, the consolidation process and in communicating with the community. The remaining principals either did not need assistance (15 percent), or feel the assistance they received was minimal (35 percent). Principal Matt Henry states, "I did all the work, but the area office took all the credit."

Communication Problems Between Central and Area Offices and the Schools

Eighty-five percent of the principals who were interviewed feel that communication between central and area offices and the schools concerning priorities and directives for action is problematic. The majority cite conflicting directives from central and area office, conflicting schedules for reporting information, overlapping meetings, and problems of control or turf disagreements between central and area office that place the schools in the middle. States Leroy Jones, "Lines of authority are a mess. The area would like exclusive domain over principals so they do not feel free to ask central office for help. Central office staff were informed to go through the area when communicating with principals." Nonetheless, most principals would like to take their orders from the area office, and have all central office requests filter through the areas. They would also like the area offices to control staffing allocations, rather than central control as currently exists.

These problems seem to be widespread in MCPS, since most central and area office respondents also addressed them in some way. Conflicting demands from central and area offices are cited as frequent sources of confusion for the principal by one-fifth of the central and area office staff who were interviewed. Central office staff perceive the area offices as individual fiefdoms that have their own rules and regulations, making it difficult for staff to deal in the same way with each area. Area office staff perceive central office as insensitive to the day-to-day management needs of a school and not really understanding what goes on in schools.

Principals tend to agree with the area office perception of central office. "I was assigned to a committee to interview a new central office department director last year," says Anne P[illegible]rs. "They scheduled the interviews for the last day of school. I could[illegible]t be out of school on the last day." Sam Shiply adds, "Maintenance had to fix a water pipe in my school that had been broken for some time. When did they choose to come? Halloween!"

THE PRINCIPALS' AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY

Principals in MCPS feel they have many job responsibilities. Some principals feel overwhelmed by their responsibilities, and there is disagreement among principals regarding whether they have sufficient authority to fulfill their responsibilities. Some principals relate their perceived lack of authority to the usurping of their role by staff in the central or area office, while other principals feel they can take whatever authority they need.

Responsibility

Over 90 percent of the principals who were interviewed feel they are fully responsible for everything that happens in their schools. Over half the principals do not feel comfortable with this responsibility, however. The two primary reasons given by principals for this discomfort are overwhelming responsibilities and lack of resources to fulfill the responsibilities. Says Marge Goldstein, "I have so much that I am responsible for, sometimes I just can't do everything. The area office just has to understand."

When asked if their fellow principals see themselves as fully responsible, only one-third said "yes." The most frequent reason given by principals for their colleagues not feeling responsible was over-contol of principals by the central and area office. Area and central office staff generally agree with the principals and feel that they are fully responsible for their schools. Those who disagreed cited as problems the number of central office policies and directives that principals are governed by, the fact that principals do not have full control over budget and staffing, and that if something goes wrong in the school, the area office, and sometimes the central office take over.

Authority

The question of authority provokes a somewhat different response. Eighty-five percent of the principals who were interviewed feel they have sufficient authority to manage their schools. When asked if their colleagues have sufficient authority, however, most said "no." The major reasons why principals do not feel they have sufficient authority, according to their colleagues, are the following: principals do not have enough autonomy, area and central offices are too controling and overrule principals rather than backing them up administratively, and principals do not use the authority they have.

Perceived Interference by Central and Area Office Staff

Over one-third of the principals feel that central and/or area office staff have inappropriate authority over them. Principals cited area supervisors, who, while not officially over them in line authority, have direct access to their supervisors, the Area Associate Superintendents. Several principals suggested that the elementary supervisors feel they are principals' supervisors. When asked if staff in central office had authority over them or

their staffs, virtually all principals said "no, but there are some who think they do." Among staff listed were curriculum coordinators, DEA, special education, and maintenance. Of particular concern to principals are special education and curriculum coordinators who supervise specialists in the school. Principals feel these staff assume too much control over their teachers.

Over 80 percent of the school board and central office respondents and 70 percent of the area office staff feel principals have sufficient authority to manage their schools, but some principals do not recognize that they have such authority. Sixty percent of the central and area office respondents cited central and/or area office control as the primary reason for principals feeling they have insufficient authority. One-fourth of the central office respondents feel principals have abdicated their authority, but only a small number of area office staff feel this way. Several staff in central and area offices also feel staffing considerations and contractual agreements contribute to the feeling of not enough authority among principals.

Data gathered in this study reflect the lack of a single statement of principals' administrative functions and authority. First, program implementation and monitoring of student performance is considered a primary job responsibility by central office staff, area office staff, and principals. It is unclear where one staff member's responsibilities end and another's begins. Secondly, not all principals feel that central and area office and the Board of Education view these two areas as principals' major responsibilities. Finally, principals would like to have the lines of authority clarified between central office supervisors and staff in their schools, and between area office supervisors and themselves. "My area supervisor thinks she is supposed to supervise me, rather than support me," says one principal. His colleague agrees, "MCPS needs to make the role of the area supervisor less 'squishy'." And, says another, "There are some people telling me what to do who have never been in the role of principal and do not understand the needs and demands on me. They forget that we are dealing with little bodies and they come first."

THE PRINCIPALS' JOB SATISFACTION: WOULD THEY DO IT AGAIN?

All but one of the elementary principals who were interviewed report that their job is rewarding and fulfilling. Over half of the principals also feel it is frustrating and loaded with drudgery. While they find the instructional and staff leadership aspects of their jobs fulfilling, the majority of the principals would dispense in a minute with paper work, communication with vocal parents, and much of the burdens of implementing special programs.

Principals spend many hours on the job. A 50 hour work week is not unusual, with several hours per month spent in evening meetings. Many principals are frustrated by the administrative hoops they have to jump through, and the amount of time they feel is wasted and taken away from time they could spend on the instructional program. Many feel that the school system does not support them in their administrative decisions regarding students and/or staff. Several are fed up with the contractual negotiations and what they think of as staff pettiness.

Two-thirds of the principals who were interviewed feel that MCPS provides them with opportunities to renew themselves professionally by allowing them to attend professional conferences, or provides training within the school system which allows them to grow professionally. However, many principals feel that they cannot take advantage of these training opportunities because they would be away from their schools for too much time. For principals who are the sole administrators in their schools, leaving the school for more than a few hours at a time is virtually impossible.

Would they become principals again? The overwhelming majority say "yes." Why? "Because the job is fulfilling. I feel a sense of accomplishment watching my staff and students grow," says Leroy Jones. Indeed, the observation data indicate that elementary principals have many opportunities to feel professionally and emotionally fulfilled through the performance and behavior of students in their schools. The openness, innocence, and honesty of young children provides a benefit to elementary principals that is not matched in the secondary schools.

Perhaps the best description of this feeling is a statement made by nationally-renowned educator Benjamin S. Bloom several years ago at a national educational conference. Dr. Bloom was feeling somewhat melancholy because he and his colleages were all getting older and were beginning to retire from active life in education. He said, however, that as he continued to conduct his educational studies, there was one thing that kept him optimistic about the future. "As we all get older," he said, "one thing will always remain the same, and for this I am grateful. First graders will continue to be six."

APPENDIX A

EXHIBITS

EXHIBIT 1

AVERAGE PERCENTAGE OF TIME ELEMENTARY PRINCIPALS WERE OBSERVED IN VARIOUS JOB FUNCTIONS

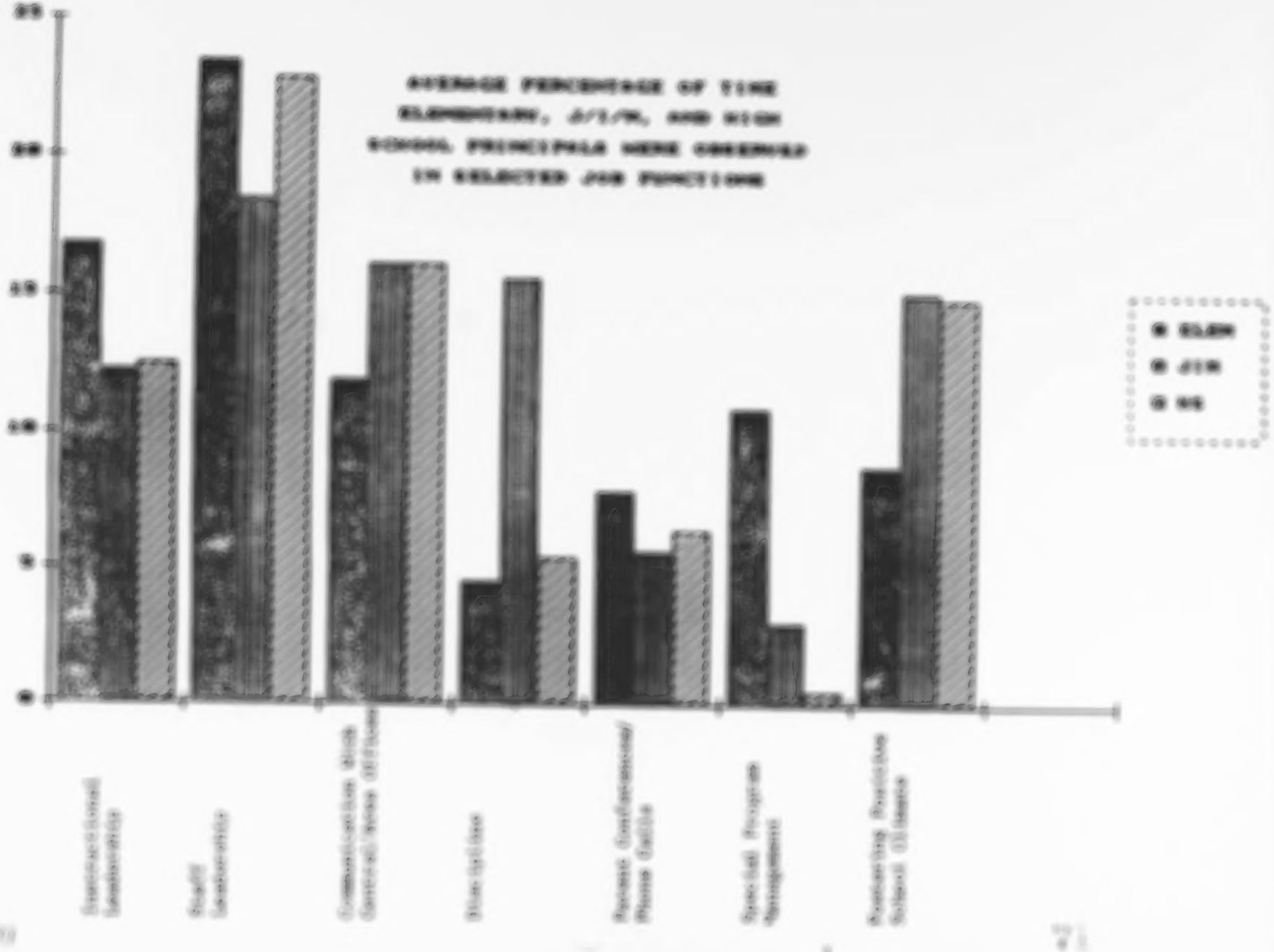

AVERAGE PERCENTAGE OF TIME ELEMENTARY, JUNIOR, AND HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPALS WERE OBSERVED IN SELECTED JOB FUNCTIONS
ELEM
JUN
HS
Instructional Leadership
Staff Leadership
Parent Conferences/ Phone Calls
Special Program Management
Supervising Routine School Business

EXHIBIT 3

PERCENTAGE OF TIME ELEMENTARY PRINCIPALS
WERE OBSERVED PERFORMING SELECTED JOB FUNCTIONS
(FIRST QUARTILE, MEDIAN, AND THIRD QUARTILE)

Instructional Leadership

Staff Leadership

Central/Area Communication

Managing Special Programs

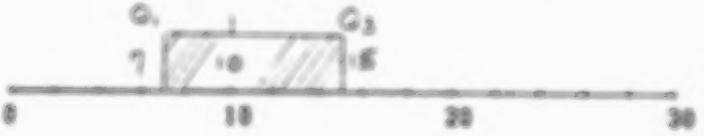
Fostering School Climate

Discipline

EXHIBIT 4

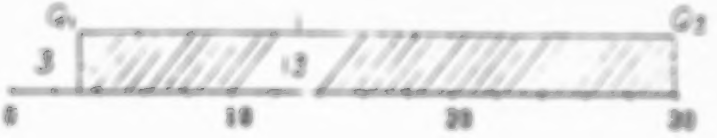
PERCENTAGE OF TIME J/I/M LEVEL PRINCIPALS
WERE OBSERVED PERFORMING SELECTED JOB FUNCTIONS
(FIRST QUARTILE, MEDIAN, AND THIRD QUARTILE)

Instructional Leadership



Staff Leadership

Central/Area Communication



Managing Special Programs

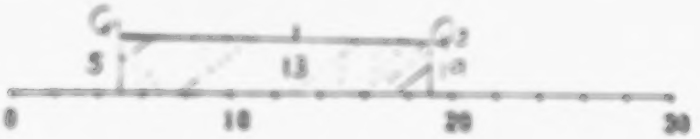
Fostering School Climate

Discipline

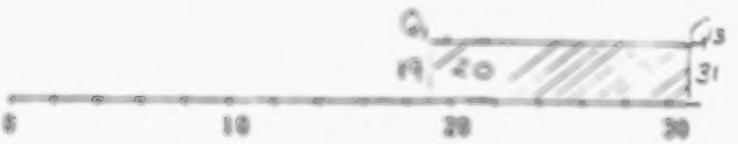
EXHIBIT 5

PERCENTAGE OF TIME SENIOR HIGH PRINCIPALS
WERE OBSERVED PERFORMING SELECTED JOB FUNCTIONS
(FIRST QUARTILE, MEDIAN, AND THIRD QUARTILE)

Instructional Leadership



Staff Leadership



Central/Area Communication

Managing Special Programs

Fostering School Climate

Discipline

APPENDIX B

STATISTICAL TABLES

TABLE 1

Sample of Respondents Who Participated in the Study

Instrument/Process	Type of Staff	Number
Executive Interviews		
	Elementary Principals	27
	Elementary Teachers	103
	Central Office Staff	
	Associate Supts. or above	3
	Dept. or Division Directors	15
	Coordinators, Planners, or Supervisors	14
	Specialists	8
	Administrative Assistant	1
		41
	Area Office Staff	
	Associate Supterintendents	3
	Directors of Educational Services	2
	Elementary Supervisors	6
	Supervisors/Asst. Supervisors of Special Services	6
	Supervisors/Asst. Supervisors of Building Services	3
	Transportation Supervisors	2
	Teacher Specialists/Teachers	20
	Pupil Personnel Workers	3
	Psychologists	3
	Administrative Assistants	3
		51
	School Board Members	2
Paper Work Study	Elementary Principals	42
Shadowing	Elementary Principals	18
	J/I/M Principals	7
	H.S. Principals	8

TABLE 2

Perceptions of Respondents Regarding Instructional Leadership as a Priority for Elementary Principals

	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
Principals who feel instructional leadership is a priority for them	17	63
Principals who think central office staff, area office staff, and school board feel instructional leadership is a priority for principals	20	74
Principals who think central office and area office staff feel monitoring implementation of curricula is a priority for principals	16	59
Central office staff and school board members who feel instructional leadership is a priority for principals	37	86
Area office staff who feel instructional leadership is a priority for principals	45	88

TABLE 3

Perceptions of Respondents Regarding Amount of Time Elementary Principals Can Spend on Instructional Leadership

	Average % of Time
Average amount of time elementary principals spend on instructional leadership	16

	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
Principals who feel they have enough time for instructional leadership	8	30
Central office staff and school board members who feel principals spend a large percentage of their time on instructional leadership	15	35
Area office staff who feel principals spend a large percentage of their time on instructional leadership	15	29

TABLE 4

Perceptions of Respondents Concerning Uniformity of Curriculum Implementation

	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
Principals who feel implementation of new curricula is functioning smoothly	11	41
Principals who feel central and area office would like them to do more monitoring of curriculum implementation	10	37
Central office staff and school board members who feel curricula are implemented uniformly	4	9
Area office staff who feel curricula are implemented uniformly	7	14
Central office staff and school board members who feel curricula cannot or do not need to be implemented uniformly	5	12
Area office staff who feel curricula cannot or do not need to be implemented uniformly	3	6

TABLE 5

Principals' and Teachers' Perceptions Concerning Training Needs for Uniform Curriculum Implementation

	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
Principals who feel they need training in monitoring implementation of curricula	14	52
Principals who feel new teachers in their schools need more training in implementing new curricula	17	63
Principals who feel veteran teachers in their schools need more training in implementing new curricula	21	78
Teachers who feel they need more training on new curriculum implementation	35	34

TABLE 6

Reasons Given by School Board Members and Central and Area Office Staff Explaining Why Curricula Are Not Uniformly Implemented

	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
School Board and Central Office Responses		
Principals have different priorities regarding curriculum implementation	20 *	51 *
Principals need more training in monitoring implementation of curriculum	6	15
Teachers need more training in implementation of new curricula	8	21
Area Office Responses		
Principals have different priorities regarding curriculum implementation	17	39
Principals need more training in monitoring implementation of curriculum	14	32
Teachers need more training in implementation of new curricula	8	18

* Note: Numbers and percentages based on respondents who feel curricula are not implemented uniformly.

TABLE 7

Perceptions of Respondents Concerning Adequacy of Supplies to Implement New Curricula

	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
Principals who feel supplies are sufficient	8	30
Principals who would like autonomy over their budgets for supplies	18	67
Principals who feel they have both the latitude and resources to redirect other funds into instructional supplies	8	30
Teachers who feel supplies are sufficient	64	62

TABLE 8

Perceptions of Respondents Concerning Flexibility Staff Have in Implementing Curricula

	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
Principals' perceptions of flexibility they have in implementing new curricula:		
Sufficient flexibility	10	38 *
Some flexibility	5	19
No flexibility	11	42
Principals' perceptions of flexibility they have in tailoring new curricula to specific needs of students in their schools:		
Sufficient flexibility	14	56 *
Some flexibility	7	28
No flexibility	4	16
Teachers' perceptions of flexibility they have in implementing new curricula:		
Sufficient flexibility	50	49 *
Some flexibility	14	14
No flexibility	26	25
Not applicable	12	12

* Note: Not all respondents answered these questions.

TABLE 9

Elementary Principals' Responses Concerning Amount of Flexibility They Have in Prioritizing Non-instructional Demands

	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
Amount of flexibility principals feel they have:		
A lot	6	22
Some	11	41
None	10	37
Principals are asked to respond to requests:		
At least once a week	11	41
Once or twice a month	12	44
Infrequently	4	15

Table 13

Perceptions of Respondents Concerning Monitoring Student Performance to a Priority for Principals and Improving Principals Head in This Area

	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
Principals who feel standardized tests should be used to monitor student performance	8	13
Principals who would like to spend less time on systematic testing	8	13
Principals who think central office and area office staff and school board members feel monitoring student performance is a priority for principals	13	24
Central office staff and school board members who feel monitoring student performance is a priority for principals	24	44
Area office staff who feel monitoring student performance is a priority for principals	44	72
Central office staff and school board members who think principals need assistance in monitoring student performance	41	74
Area office staff who think principals need assistance in monitoring student performance	34	71
Central office staff and school board members who think principals need assistance in interpreting test scores	13	24
Area office staff who think principals need assistance in interpreting test scores	24	51
Central office staff and school board members who think principals need assistance adapting curricu- lum for student needs identified by test results	11	23
Area office staff who think principals need assist- ance adapting curriculum to student needs identi- fied by test results	0	10

Table 11

Percentage of Respondents Concerning Laws of Their Country

	Yes, of Respondents	% of Respondents
Percentage who feel their country are used by multi-media to compare schools		
Television	(1)	(1)
Newspaper	(2)	(2)
Percentage offering study and school their work, some offering study	(3)	(3)
	(4)	(4)
Percentage who feel their country are used by computer and communities to compare schools		
Television	(1)	(1)
Newspaper	(2)	(2)
Percentage offering study and school their work, some offering study	(3)	(3)
	(4)	(4)
Percentage who feel studies participate on their after school and the principal are evaluated by parents and/or some offering		
Television	(1)	(1)
Newspaper	(2)	(2)
Percentage of principle who would like support from parents and some offering to participate, but do not want their participation to be monitored by these offering	(3)	(3)
Percentage of newspaper who feel studies participate on their offering and principal by their principle	(1)	(1)
Percentage who feel studies participate on their offering international principles are accepted		
Television	(1)	(1)
Newspaper	(2)	(2)
Percentage offering study and school their work, some offering study	(3)	(3)
	(4)	(4)

TABLE 12

Perceptions of Respondents Regarding Credit Leadership as a Priority
for Elementary Principals

	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
Principals who feel credit leadership is a priority for them	21	78
Principals who think external offices credit, area office credit, and school board members feel credit leadership is a priority for principals	9	33
Principals who feel they have enough time for credit leadership	14	52
External offices credit and school board members who feel principals spend a large percentage of their time on credit leadership	23	67
Area offices credit who feel principals spend a large percentage of their time on credit leadership	19	70
	Average % of Time	
Average amount of time elementary principals spend on credit leadership	23	

TABLE 13

Percentage of Respondents Who Feel Principals Have Flexibility to Reassign Professional Staffs' Work Hours and Duties

	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
Principals	15	36
(Central) office staff and school board members	13	25 *
Area office staff	24	52 *

* Note: Not all respondents answered this question.

TABLE 14

Percentage of Respondents Who Feel Principals Have Flexibility to Reassign Staff to Fulfill Unique Instructional Needs of Students

	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
Principals	19	70
(Central) office staff and school board members	28	45
Area office staff	29	57

TABLE 13

Perceptions of Respondents Regarding the Evaluation Process for Professional Staff

	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
Evaluation procedures are effective		
Principals	13	48
Central office staff and school board mems.	4	14
Area office staff	13	23
Evaluation of effective teachers is too time consuming		
Principals	6 *	22 *
Central office staff and school board mems.	2	7
Area office staff	0	0
Evaluation of ineffective teachers is too time consuming and troublesome		
Principals	4 *	15 *
Central office staff and school board mems.	9	21
Area office staff	9	18
Evaluation procedure is only as good as people implementing it		
Principals	2 *	7 *
Central office staff and school board mems.	15	33
Area office staff	15	29
Evaluation form needs to be brought up to date		
Principals	3 *	11 *
Central office staff and school board mems.	2	7
Area office staff	3	6
Need ways to identify superior staff		
Principals	2 *	7 *
Central office staff and school board mems.	4	14
Area office staff	0	0
Evaluation form not appropriate for non-classroom professional staff		
Principals	2 *	7 *
Central office staff and school board mems.	2	5
Area office staff	0	0
Need a different evaluation process for new teachers		
Principals	2 *	7 *
Central office staff and school board mems.	2	7
Area office staff	3	6

* Note: Responses to these questions obtained from open-ended questions regarding the effectiveness of the evaluation system.

TABLE 16

Percentage of Respondents Who Feel the MCCDSB Senior Most Qualified (SQ) Selection Process for Supporting Services Staff Has Created Problems

	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
Principals	20 *	74 *
Central office staff and school board members	13 *	33 *
Area office staff	12 *	24 *

* NOTE: Response obtained from answers to other questions. SQ was not probed directly as an issue.

TABLE 17

Perceptions of Respondents Regarding the Evaluation Process for Supporting Services Staff

	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
Evaluation process is effective		
Principals	9 *	33 *
Central office staff and school board members	1 *	0 *
Area office staff	0 *	0 *
Evaluation process is too time consuming		
Principals	3	11
Central office staff and school board members	0	0
Area office staff	0	0
Evaluation form is too general and vague		
Principals	9	33
Central office staff and school board members	11	26
Area office staff	8	16

* NOTE: Not all respondents addressed the supporting services evaluation process in their responses.

TABLE 10

Perceptions of Respondents Regarding Selection, Surplusing, and Retention of Professional Staff

	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
Personnel procedures are effective		
Principals	11	41
Central office staff and school board members	20	71
Area office staff	26	74
Personnel procedures are ineffective		
Principals	15	56
Central office staff and school board members	13	31
Area office staff	11	22
Involuntary transfers are a problem		
Principals	5 *	19 *
Central office staff and school board members	14	33
Area office staff	14	27
Administrative placements are a problem		
Principals	5 *	19 *
Central office staff and school board members	5	12
Area office staff	5	10
Surplusing based on seniority is a problem		
Principals	6 *	22 *
Central office staff and school board members	0	0
Area office staff	1	2

* NOTE: Responses obtained from answers to other questions. These areas were not probed directly during the interviews.

TABLE 19

Perceptions of Respondents Concerning Amount of Time Elementary Principals Can Spend Creating a Positive School Climate

	Average % of Time	
Average amount of time elementary principals spend creating a positive school climate	10	
	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
Principals who would like to spend more time interacting with students fostering a good school climate	13	48
Central office staff and school board members who feel principals spend a large percentage of their time fostering a positive school climate	1	2
Area office staff who feel principals spend a large percentage of their time fostering a positive school climate	4	8

TABLE 20

Perceptions of Respondents Concerning Amount of Time Elementary Principals Spend on Student Guidance

	Average % of Time	
Average amount of time elementary principals spend on student guidance	1	
	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
Principals who would like to spend more time on student guidance	5	19
Central office staff and school board members who feel principals spend a large percentage of their time on student guidance	0	0
Area office staff who feel principals spend a large percentage of their time on student guidance	1	2

TABLE 21

Perceptions of Respondents Concerning Amount of Time Elementary Principals Spend on Student Discipline

	Average % of Time	
Average amount of time elementary principals spend on student discipline	4	
	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
Principals who would like to spend less time on student discipline	6	22
Central office staff and school board members who feel principals spend a large percentage of their time on student discipline	6	14
Area office staff who feel principals spend a large percentage of their time on student discipline	9	18
Respondents who feel the presence of special needs students creates more discipline problems in the school		
Principals	9	33
Central office staff and school board mems.	9	21
Area office staff	19	37

TABLE 22

Perceptions of Respondents Concerning Amount of Time Elementary Principals Spend in Interactions with Parents and the Community

	Average % of Time
Average amount of time elementary principals spend:	
Interacting with parents	8
On community relations	3
On community building use	1

	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
Principals who would like to spend <u>less</u> time interacting with parents	4	15
Principals who feel central and area office want them to keep parents quiet	14	52
Central office staff and school board members who feel principals spend a large percentage of their time interacting with parents	10	23
Area office staff who feel principals spend a large percentage of their time interacting with parents	12	24
Principals' perceptions of amount of interaction they have with parents		
More than average for MCPS	13	48
Average for MCPS	10	37
Less than average for MCPS	4	15
Teachers' perceptions of amount of interaction they have with parents		
More than average for MCPS	21	20
Average for MCPS	61	59
Less than average for MCPS	21	20
Principals who think central office staff, area office staff, and school board members feel community relations is a priority for principals	5	19
Principals who would like to spend <u>more</u> time on community relations	3	11
Central office staff and school board members who feel principals spend a large percentage of their time on community relations	8	19
Area office staff who feel principals spend a large percentage of their time on community relations	10	20

TABLE 23

Perceptions of Respondents Concerning the Effect of Community Input on Instructional Priorities

	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
Respondents who feel community input affects how instructional priorities are established		
Principals	9	33
Teachers	49	48
Central office staff and school board mems.	30	70
Area office staff	38	75
Respondents who feel community input is helpful in establishing instructional priorities		
Principals	2 *	7 *
Teachers	4	4
Central office staff and school board mems.	4	9
Area office staff	4	8
Respondents who feel principals vary in their ability or willingness to control community input		
Principals	6 *	22 *
Teachers	11	11
Central office staff and school board mems.	8	19
Area office staff	11	22

* NOTE: Responses obtained from answers to other questions. These areas were not probed directly during the interviews.

TABLE 24

Principals' Reports of Problems Caused by Community Building Use

	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
Community use causes work for secretary	16	60
Community use causes work for building services staff	15	56
Teaching staff is displaced from classrooms and/or media center by community building use	6	22
Principal feels responsible for groups in the building	7	26

TABLE 25

Perceptions of Respondents Concerning the Burdens Of Special Programs in the School

	Average % of Time	
Amount of time principals spend on special program management	11	
	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
Respondents who feel special program students impact on the principal and the school		
Principals	23	85
Central office staff and school board mems,	39	91
Area office staff	44	86
Ways in which special program students impact on principals and schools:		
Additional time needed for EMT's, IEP's, and annual reviews	14	52
Additional communication needed with parents	10	37
Additional interactions and meetings needed with staff	12	44
Additional interactions between principal and students	8	30
Additional paper work required	9	33
Additional student discipline problems arise	9	33
More time spent on transportation problems	3	11
Disadvantaged students require special program planning	2	7
Disadvantaged population requires community outreach	2	7
Additional staff time needed for identification and screening of gifted and talented students	3	11
Additional interactions with parents of gifted students	1	4

TABLE 26

Percentage of Respondents Indicating the Need for Additional Staffing in Elementary Schools

	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
Elementary schools need curriculum specialists		
Principals	4 *	15 *
Central office staff and school board members	0 *	0 *
Area office staff	4 *	8 *
Elementary schools need assistant principals		
Principals	4	15
Central office staff and school board members	2	5
Area office staff	4	8
Elementary schools need additional guidance counselors		
Principals	3	11
Central office staff and school board members	2	5
Area office staff	5	10
Elementary schools need health aides		
Principals	2	7

* NOTE: Responses obtained from answers to other questions. These areas were not probed directly during the interviews.

TABLE 27

Perceptions of Respondents Concerning Paper Work Burdens

	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
There is too much paper work		
Principals who were interviewed	20	74
Principals who participated in paper work study	38	90
Principals spend a large proportion of their time on paper work		
Central office staff and school board members	21	49
Area office staff	23	45
Too many duplicate requests for information		
Principals who were interviewed	9	33
Principals who participated in paper work study	24	57
Central office staff and school board members	2	5
Area office staff	4	8
Too many memos and requests that are difficult to understand		
Principals who participated in paper work study	21	50
Too much time is spent on minority achievement reporting		
Principals who were interviewed	6	22
Principals who participated in paper work study	6	14
Too much time is spent on minigrants		
Principals who were interviewed	3	11
Principals who participated in paper work study	3	7
Too much time is spent on administration of testing		
Principals who were interviewed	8	30
Principals who participated in paper work study	8	19
Too much time is spent on Gifted and Talented program		
Principals who were interviewed	2	7
Principals who participated in paper work study	5	12
Too much time is spent on evaluation of staff		
Principals who were interviewed	8	30
Principals who participated in paper work study	12	29

TABLE 28

Perceptions of Respondents Concerning Frequency and Time Frame of Requests for Information

	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
Principals who were interviewed who receive requests for information from central or area office:		
At least once a week	11	41
Once or twice a month	12	44
Infrequently	4	15
Central office staffs' self-reports of frequency of requests made:		
Requests made at least once a week	5	12
Requests made once or twice a month	9	21
Requests made infrequently	29	67
Area office staffs' self-reports of frequency of requests made:		
Requests made at least once a week	7	14
Requests made once or twice a month	19	37
Requests made infrequently	25	49
Amount of time central office staff allow principals to respond to requests:		
Immediate response needed	14	33
Principals have at least one week	17	40
Response time varies	12	28
Amount of time area office staff allow principals to respond to requests:		
Immediate response needed	19	37
Principals have at least one week	32	63
Principals who participated in paper work study who feel time given to respond to requests is too little	16	38
Principals who participated in paper work study who receive documents long after date they were originated	5	12

TABLE 29

Elementary Principals' Perceptions of the Need for Microcomputers in Their Schools and Training and Support Desired

	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
Principals who feel microcomputers would be helpful to them in managing their schools	25	93
Ways in which principals feel they can use a microcomputer:		
Maintaining class lists	7	26
Maintaining bus lists	5	19
Keeping attendance records	4	15
Word processing	3	11
Training in microcomputer use needed	25	93
Ongoing support needed after initial training session	4	15

TABLE 30

Perceptions of Respondents Concerning Responses of Area and Central Office To Parents' Complaints

	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
Principals' perceptions of how area office reacts to parents' complaints:		
Area office refers parents back to the principal	11	41
Area office looks into the matter	13	48
Area office sides with the parents	2	7
Principals' perceptions of support they receive from area office in parent complaints:		
Area office supports the principal	13	48
Support varies depending on the situation	4	15
Area office does not support the principal	10	37
Actions principals feel area office would want them to take after parents' complaints:		
Follow up and resolve issue with parents	19	70
Placate parents	3	11
Justify actions to area office	2	7
Area office staffs' reports of how they react to parents' complaints:		
Refer parents back to the principal	17	33 *
Contact the principal	29	56
Listen to parents and give advice	14	27
Bring problem to attention of higher-ups in area office	4	8
Central office staffs' and school board members' reports of how they react to parents' complaints:		
Refer parents back to the principal	17	40 *
Contact the principal	10	23
Refer parent to area office	17	40
Discuss problem with area office	5	12
Interpret policy and regulations to parent	8	19

* NOTE: Percentages add to more than 100 because respondents gave multiple answers.

TABLE 31

Perceptions of Respondents Concerning Problems Created by Lack of Coordination between Central and Area Office Staff

	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
Overlapping responsibilities between central and area offices		
Principals	8	30 *
Central office staff and school board members	5	12 *
Area office staff	17	33 *
Conflicting demands for information from central and area office staff		
Principals	9	33
Central office staff and school board members	7	16
Area office staff	10	20
Better communication needed between central and area office staff		
Principals	13	48
Central and area offices exert too much control over schools		
Principals	7	26
Principals' decisions are not backed by area office		
Principals	5	19
Give central office more power		
Central office staff and school board members	3	7
Give area offices more power		
Central office staff and school board members	4	9
Area office staff	13	25
Too much bureauracy		
Principals	2	7
Better coordination of area and central office meetings needed		
Principals	4	15
Three area offices operate independently and by different rules		
Central office staff and school board members	7	16
Central office does not understand what goes on in schools		
Area office staff	5	10

* NOTE: Responses in this table obtained from open ended questions.

TABLE 32

Perceptions of Respondents Regarding Whether Elementary Principals are Viewed as Fully Responsible for Their Schools

	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
Principals who feel fully responsible for what happens in their schools	26	96
Principals who are overwhelmed by their responsibility	15	56
Principals who think other principals do not feel fully responsible	18	67
Reasons Given		
Area office exerts too much control over schools	7	26
Some principals are weak	2	7
Some principals do not take full responsibility	3	11
Central office staff and school board members who think principals do not feel fully responsible	30	70
Reasons Given		
Area office control	11	26
Abdication of responsibility by princpals	8	19
Union contracts	2	5
Area office staff who think principals do not feel fully responsible	25	49
Reasons Given		
Board of Education directives	15	29
Community pressures	3	6
Conflicting priorities	3	6

TABLE 33

Perceptions of Respondents Regarding Whether Elementary Principals Have Sufficient Authority to Manage Their Schools

	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
Principals who feel they have sufficient authority to manage their schools	23	85
Principals who feel others think they do not have sufficient authority	18	67
Reasons Given		
Principals would like more authority	9	33
Principals' decisions are not backed by the superintendent	3	11
Some principals do not take the authority that is theirs	4	15
Staffing is controlled by union contracts	1	4
Central office staff and school board members who think principals do not feel they have sufficient authority	36	84
Reasons Given		
Central or area office control over schools	20	47
Some principals do not take the authority that is theirs	9	21
Union contracts	5	12
Politics	3	7
Area office staff who think principals do not feel they have sufficient authority	36	71
Reasons Given		
Central of area office control over schools	22	43
Input from parents	5	10
Lack of staff or resources	3	6
Union contracts	3	6
Some principals do not take the authority that is theirs	3	6